

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1863.

## The Small House at Allington.

### CHAPTER XLVI.

#### JOHN EAMES AT HIS OFFICE.



R. CROSBIE and his wife went upon their honeymoon tour to Folkestone in the middle of February, and returned to London about the end of March. Nothing of special moment to the interests of our story occurred during those six weeks, unless the proceedings of the young married couple by the sea-side may be thought to have any special interest. With regard to those proceedings I can only say that Crosbie was very glad when they were brought to a close. All holiday-making is hard work, but holiday-making with nothing to do is the hardest work of all.

At the end of March they went into their new house, and we will hope that Lady Alexandrina did not find it very cold.

During this time Lily's recovery from her illness was being completed. She had no relapse, nor did anything occur to create a new fear on her account. But, nevertheless, Dr. Crofts gave it as his opinion that it would be inexpedient to move her into a fresh house at Lady-day. March is not a kindly month for invalids; and therefore with some regret on the part of Mrs. Dale, with much impatience on that of Bell, and with considerable outspoken remonstrance from Lily herself, the squire was requested to let them remain through the month of April. How the squire received this request, and in what way he assented to the doctor's reasoning, will be told in the course of a chapter or two.

In the meantime John Eames had continued his career in London without much immediate satisfaction to himself, or to the lady who boasted to be his heart's chosen queen. Miss Amelia Roper, indeed, was becoming very cross, and in her ill temper was playing a game that was tending to create a frightful amount of hot water in Burton Crescent. She was devoting herself to a flirtation with Mr. Cradell, not only under the immediate eyes of Johnny Eames, but also under those of Mrs. Lupex. John Eames, the blockhead, did not like it. He was above all things anxious to get rid of Amelia and her claims; so anxious, that on certain moody occasions he would threaten himself with diverse tragical terminations to his career in London. He would enlist. He would go to Australia. He would blow out his brains. He would have "an explanation" with Amelia, tell her that she was a vixen, and proclaim his hatred. He would rush down to Allington and throw himself in despair at Lily's feet. Amelia was the bugbear of his life. Nevertheless, when she flirted with Cradell, he did not like it, and was ass enough to speak to Cradell about it.

"Of course I don't care," he said, "only it seems to me that you are making a fool of yourself."

"I thought you wanted to get rid of her."

"She's nothing on earth to me; only it does, you know——"

"Does do what?" asked Cradell.

"Why, if I was to be fal-lalling with that married woman, you wouldn't like it. That's all about it. Do you mean to marry her?"

"What!—Amelia?"

"Yes; Amelia."

"Not if I know it."

"Then if I were you I would leave her alone. She's only making a fool of you."

Eames' advice may have been good, and the view taken by him of Amelia's proceedings may have been correct; but as regarded his own part in the affair, he was not wise. Miss Roper, no doubt, wished to make him jealous;—and she succeeded in the teeth of his aversion to her and of his love elsewhere. He had no desire to say soft things to Miss Roper. Miss Roper, with all her skill, could not extract a word pleasantly soft from him once a week. But, nevertheless, soft words to

her and from her in another quarter made him uneasy. Such being the case, must we not acknowledge that John Eames was still floundering in the ignorance of his hobbledehoyhood?

The Lupexes at this time still held their ground in the Crescent, although repeated warnings to go had been given them. Mrs. Roper, though she constantly spoke of sacrificing all that they owed her, still hankered, with a natural hankering, after her money. And as each warning was accompanied by a demand for payment, and usually produced some slight subsidy on account, the thing went on from week to week; and at the beginning of April Mr. and Mrs. Lupex were still boarders at Mrs. Roper's house.

Eames had heard nothing from Allington since the time of his Christmas visit, and his subsequent correspondence with Lord De Guest. In his letters from his mother he was told that game came frequently from Guestwick Manor, and in this way he knew that he was not forgotten by the earl. But of Lily he had heard not a word,—except, indeed, the rumour, which had now become general, that the Dales from the Small House were about to move themselves into Guestwick. When first he learned this he construed the tidings as favourable to himself, thinking that Lily, removed from the grandeur of Allington, might possibly be more easily within his reach; but, latterly, he had given up any such hope as that, and was telling himself that his friend at the Manor had abandoned all idea of making up the marriage. Three months had already elapsed since his visit. Five months had passed since Crosbie had surrendered his claim. Surely such a knave as Crosbie might be forgotten in five months! If any steps could have been taken through the squire, surely three months would have sufficed for them! It was very manifest to him that there was no ground of hope for him at Allington, and it would certainly be well for him to go off to Australia. He would go to Australia, but he would thrash Cradell first for having dared to interfere with Amelia Roper. That, generally, was the state of his mind during the first week in April.

Then there came to him a letter from the earl which instantly effected a great change in all his feelings; which taught him to regard Australia as a dream, and almost put him into a good humour with Cradell. The earl had by no means lost sight of his friend's interests at Allington; and, moreover, those interests were now backed by an ally who in this matter must be regarded as much more powerful than the earl. The squire had given in his consent to the Eames alliance.

The earl's letter was as follows:—

MY DEAR JOHN,

*Guestwick Manor, April 7, 18—*

I TOLD you to write to me again, and you haven't done it. I saw your mother the other day, or else you might have been dead for anything I knew. A young man always ought to write letters when he is told to do so. [Eames, when he had got so far, felt himself rather aggrieved by this rebuke, knowing that he had abstained from writing to his patron simply from an unwillingness to intrude upon him with his letters. "By Jove, I'll write to him every week of his life, till he's sick

of me," Johnny said to himself when he found himself thus instructed as to a young man's duties.]

And now I have got to tell you a long story, and I should like it much better if you were down here, so that I might save myself the trouble; but you would think me ill-natured if I were to keep you waiting. I happened to meet Mr. Dale the other day, and he said that he should be very glad if a certain young lady would make up her mind to listen to a certain young friend of mine. So I asked him what he meant to do about the young lady's fortune, and he declared himself willing to give her a hundred a year during his life, and to settle four thousand pounds upon her after his death. I said that I would do as much on my part by the young man; but as two hundred a year, with your salary, would hardly give you enough to begin with, I'll make mine a hundred and fifty. You'll be getting up in your office soon, and with five hundred a year you ought to be able to get along; especially as you need not insure your life. I should live somewhere near Bloomsbury Square at first, because I'm told you can get a house for nothing. After all, what's fashion worth? You can bring your wife down here in the autumn, and have some shooting. She won't let you go to sleep under the trees, I'll be bound.

But you must look after the young lady. You will understand that no one has said a word to her about it; or, if they have, I don't know it. You'll find the squire on your side, that's all. Couldn't you manage to come down this Easter? Tell old Buffie, with my compliments, that I want you. I'll write to him if you like it. I did know him at one time, though I can't say I was ever very fond of him. It stands to reason that you can't get on with Miss Lily without seeing her; unless, indeed, you like better to write to her, which always seems to me to be very poor sort of fun. You'd much better come down, and go a-wooing in the regular old-fashioned way. I need not tell you that Lady Julia will be delighted to see you. You are a prime favourite with her since that affair at the railway station. She thinks a great deal more about that than she does about the bull.

Now, my dear fellow, you know all about it, and I shall take it very much amiss of you if you don't answer my letter soon.—Your very sincere friend,

DE GUEST.

When Eames had finished this letter, sitting at his office-desk, his surprise and elation were so great that he hardly knew where he was or what he ought to do. Could it be the truth that Lily's uncle had not only consented that the match should be made, but that he had also promised to give his niece a considerable fortune? For a few minutes it seemed to Johnny as though all obstacles to his happiness were removed, and that there was no impediment between him and an amount of bliss of which he had hitherto hardly dared to dream. Then, when he considered the earl's munificence, he almost cried. He found that he could not compose his mind to think, or even his hand to write. He did not know whether it would be right in him to accept such pecuniary liberality from any living man, and almost thought that he should feel himself bound to reject the earl's offer. As to the squire's money, that he knew he might accept. All that comes in the shape of a young woman's fortune may be taken by any man.

He would certainly answer the earl's letter, and that at once. He would not leave the office till he had done so. His friend should have cause to bring no further charge against him of that kind. And then again he reverted to the injustice which had been done to him in the matter of letter-writing,—as if that consideration were of moment in such



a state of circumstances as was now existing. But at last his thoughts brought themselves to the real question at issue. Would Lily Dale accept him? After all, the realization of his good fortune depended altogether upon her feelings; and, as he remembered this, his mind misgave him sorely. It was filled not only with a young lover's ordinary doubts,—with the fear and trembling incidental to the bashfulness of hobbled-hoyhood,—but with an idea that that affair with Crosbie would still stand in his way. He did not, perhaps, rightly understand all that Lily had suffered, but he conceived it to be probable that there had been wounds which even the last five months might not yet have cured. Could it be that she would allow him to cure these wounds? As he thought of this he felt almost crushed to the earth by an indomitable bashfulness and conviction of his own unworthiness. What had he to offer worthy of the acceptance of such a girl as Lilian Dale?

I fear that the Crown did not get out of John Eames an adequate return for his salary on that day. So adequate, however, had been the return given by him for some time past, that promotion was supposed throughout the Income-tax Office to be coming in his way, much to the jealousy of Cradell, Fisher, and others, his immediate compeers and cronies. And the place assigned to him by rumour was one which was generally regarded as a perfect Elysium upon earth in the Civil Service world. He was, so rumour said, to become private secretary to the First Commissioner. He would be removed by such a change as this from the large uncarpeted room in which he at present sat; occupying the same desk with another man to whom he had felt himself to be ignominiously bound, as dogs must feel when they are coupled. This room had been the bear-garden of the office. Twelve or fourteen men sat in it. Large pewter pots were brought into it daily at one o'clock, giving it an air that was not aristocratic. The senior of the room, one Mr. Love, who was presumed to have it under his immediate dominion, was a clerk of the ancient stamp, dull, heavy, unambitious, living out on the farther side of Islington, and unknown beyond the limits of his office to any of his younger brethren. He was generally regarded as having given a bad tone to the room. And then the clerks in this room would not unfrequently be blown up,—with very palpable blowings up,—by an official swell, a certain chief clerk, named Kissing, much higher in standing though younger in age than the gentleman of whom we have before spoken. He would hurry in, out of his own neighbouring chamber, with quick step and nose in the air, shuffling in his office slippers, looking on each occasion as though there were some cause to fear that the whole Civil Service were coming to an abrupt termination, and would lay about him with hard words, which some of those in the big room did not find it very easy to bear. His hair was always brushed straight up, his eyes were always very wide open,—and he usually carried a big letter-book with him, keeping in it a certain place with his finger. This book was almost too much for his strength, and he would flop it down, now on

this man's desk and now on that man's, and in a long career of such floppings had made himself to be very much hated. On the score of some old grudge he and Mr. Love did not speak to each other; and for this reason, on all occasions of fault-finding, the blown-up young man would refer Mr. Kissing to his enemy.

"I know nothing about it," Mr. Love would say, not lifting his face from his desk for a moment.

"I shall certainly lay the matter before the Board," Mr. Kissing would reply, and would then shuffle out of the room with the big book.

Sometimes Mr. Kissing would lay the matter before the Board, and then he, and Mr. Love, and two or three delinquent clerks would be summoned thither. It seldom led to much. The delinquent clerks would be cautioned. One Commissioner would say a word in private to Mr. Love, and another a word in private to Mr. Kissing. Then, when left alone, the Commissioners would have their little jokes, saying that Kissing, they feared, went by favour; and that Love should still be lord of all. But these things were done in the mild days, before Sir Raffle Buffle came to the Board.

There had been some fun in this at first; but of late John Eames had become tired of it. He disliked Mr. Kissing, and the big book out of which Mr. Kissing was always endeavouring to convict him of some official sin, and had got tired of that joke of setting Kissing and Love by the ears together. When the Assistant Secretary first suggested to him that Sir Raffle had an idea of selecting him as private secretary, and when he remembered the cosy little room, all carpeted, with a leathern arm-chair and a separate washing-stand, which in such case would be devoted to his use, and remembered also that he would be put into receipt of an additional hundred a year, and would stand in the way of still better promotion, he was overjoyed. But there were certain drawbacks. The present private secretary,—who had been private secretary also to the late First Commissioner,—was giving up his Elysium because he could not endure the tones of Sir Raffle's voice. It was understood that Sir Raffle required rather more of a private secretary, in the way of obsequious attendance, than was desirable, and Eames almost doubted his own fitness for the place.

"And why should he choose me?" he had asked the Assistant Secretary.

"Well, we have talked it over together, and I think that he prefers you to any other that has been named."

"But he was so very hard upon me about the affair at the railway station."

"I think he has heard more about that since; I think that some message has reached him from your friend, Earl De Guest."

"Oh, indeed!" said Johnny, beginning to comprehend what it was to have an earl for his friend. Since his acquaintance with the nobleman had commenced he had studiously avoided all mention of the earl's name at his office; and yet he received almost daily intimation that the fact was well known there, and not a little considered.

"But he is so very rough," said Johnny.

"You can put up with that," said his friend the Assistant Secretary. "His bark is worse than his bite, as you know; and then a hundred a year is worth having." Eames was at that moment inclined to take a gloomy view of life in general, and was disposed to refuse the place, should it be offered to him. He had not then received the earl's letter; but now, as he sat with that letter open before him, lying in the drawer beneath his desk so that he could still read it as he leaned back in his chair, he was enabled to look at things in general through a different atmosphere. In the first place, Lilian Dale's husband ought to have a room to himself, with a carpet and an arm-chair; and then that additional hundred a year would raise his income at once to the sum as to which the earl had made some sort of stipulation. But could he get that leave of absence at Easter? If he consented to be Sir Raffle's private secretary, he would make that a part of the bargain.

At this moment the door of the big room was opened, and Mr. Kissing shuffled in with very quick little steps. He shuffled in, and coming direct up to John's desk, flopped his ledger down upon it before its owner had had time to close the drawer which contained the precious letter.

"What have you got in that drawer, Mr. Eames?"

"A private letter, Mr. Kissing."

"Oh;—a private letter!" said Mr. Kissing, feeling strongly convinced there was a novel hidden there, but not daring to express his belief. "I have been half the morning, Mr. Eames, looking for this letter to the Admiralty, and you've put it under S!" A bystander listening to Mr. Kissing's tone would have been led to believe that the whole Income-tax Office was jeopardized by the terrible iniquity thus disclosed.

"Somerset House," pleaded Johnny.

"Psha;—Somerset House! Half the offices in London——"

"You'd better ask Mr. Love," said Eames. "It's all done under his special instructions." Mr. Kissing looked at Mr. Love, and Mr. Love looked steadfastly at his desk. "Mr. Love knows all about the indexing," continued Johnny. "He's index master general to the department."

"No, I'm not, Mr. Eames," said Mr. Love, who rather liked John Eames, and hated Mr. Kissing with his whole heart. "But I believe the indexes, on the whole, are very well done in this room. Some people don't know how to find letters."

"Mr. Eames," began Mr. Kissing, still pointing with a finger of bitter reproach to the misused S, and beginning an oration which was intended for the benefit of the whole room, and for the annihilation of old Mr. Love, "if you have yet to learn that the word Admiralty begins with A and not with S, you have much to learn which should have been acquired before you first came into this office. Somerset House is not a department." Then he turned round to the room at large, and repeated the last words, as though they might become very useful if taken well to

heart—"Is not a department. The Treasury is a department; the Home Office is a department; the India Board is a department—"

"No, Mr. Kissing, it isn't," said a young clerk from the other end of the room.

"You know very well what I mean, sir. The India Office is a department."

"There's no Board, sir."

"Never mind; but how any gentleman who has been in the service three months,—not to say three years,—can suppose Somerset House to be a department, is beyond my comprehension. If you have been improperly instructed——"

"We shall know all about it another time," said Eames. "Mr. Love will make a memorandum of it."

"I shan't do anything of the kind," said Mr. Love.

"If you have been wrongly instructed,—" Mr. Kissing began again, stealing a glance at Mr. Love as he did so; but at this moment the door was again opened, and a messenger summoned Johnny to the presence of the really great man. "Mr. Eames, to wait upon Sir Raffle." Upon hearing this Johnny immediately started, and left Mr. Kissing and the big book in possession of his desk. How the battle was waged, and how it raged in the large room, we cannot stop to hear, as it is necessary that we should follow our hero into the presence of Sir Raffle Buffle.

"Ah, Eames,—yes," said Sir Raffle, looking up from his desk when the young man entered; "just wait half a minute, will you?" And the knight went to work at his papers, as though fearing that any delay in what he was doing might be very prejudicial to the nation at large. "Ah, Eames,—well,—yes," he said again, as he pushed away from him, almost with a jerk, the papers on which he had been writing. "They tell me that you know the business of this office pretty well."

"Some of it, sir," said Eames.

"Well, yes; some of it. But you'll have to understand the whole of it if you come to me. And you must be very sharp about it too. You know that FitzHoward is leaving me?"

"I have heard of it, sir."

"A very excellent young man, though perhaps not—— But we won't mind that. The work is a little too much for him, and he's going back into the office. I believe Lord De Guest is a friend of yours; isn't he?"

"Yes; he is a friend of mine, certainly. He's been very kind to me."

"Ah, well. I've known the earl for many years,—for very many years; and intimately at one time. Perhaps you may have heard him mention my name?"

"Yes, I have, Sir Raffle."

"We were intimate once, but those things go off, you know. He's been the country mouse and I've been the town mouse. Ha, ha, ha! You may tell him that I say so. He won't mind that coming from me."

"Oh, no; not at all," said Eames.

"Mind you tell him when you see him. The earl is a man for whom

I've always had a great respect,—a very great respect,—I may say regard. And now, Eames, what do you say to taking FitzHoward's place? The work is hard. It is fair that I should tell you that. The work will, no doubt, be very hard. I take a greater share of what's going than my predecessors have done; and I don't mind telling you that I have been sent here, because a man was wanted who would do that." The voice of Sir Raffle, as he continued, became more and more harsh, and Eames began to think how wise FitzHoward had been. "I mean to do my duty, and I shall expect that my private secretary will do his. But, Mr. Eames, I never forget a man. Whether he be good or bad, I never forget a man. You don't dislike late hours, I suppose."

"Coming late to the office, you mean? Oh, no, not in the least."

"Staying late,—staying late. Six or seven o'clock if necessary,—putting your shoulder to the wheel when the coach gets into the mud. That's what I've been doing all my life. They've known what I am very well. They've always kept me for the heavy roads. If they paid, in the Civil Service, by the hour, I believe I should have drawn a larger income than any man in it. If you take the vacant chair in the next room you'll find it's no joke. It's only fair that I should tell you that."

"I can work as hard as any man," said Eames.

"That's right. That's right. Stick to that and I'll stick to you. It will be a great gratification to me to have by me a friend of my old friend De Guest. Tell him I say so. And now you may as well get into harness at once. FitzHoward is there. You can go in to him, and at half-past four exactly I'll see you both. I'm very exact, mind,—very;—and therefore you must be exact." Then Sir Raffle looked as though he desired to be left alone.

"Sir Raffle, there's one favour I want to ask of you," said Johnny.

"And what's that?"

"I am most anxious to be absent for a fortnight or three weeks, just at Easter. I shall want to go in about ten days."

"Absent for three weeks at Easter, when the parliamentary work is beginning! That won't do for a private secretary."

"But it's very important, Sir Raffle."

"Out of the question, Eames; quite out of the question."

"It's almost life and death to me."

"Almost life and death. Why, what are you going to do?" With all his grandeur and national importance, Sir Raffle would be very curious as to little people.

"Well, I can't exactly tell you, and I'm not quite sure myself."

"Then don't talk nonsense. It's impossible that I should spare my private secretary just at that time of the year. I couldn't do it. The service won't admit of it. You're not entitled to leave at that season. Private secretaries always take their leave in the autumn."

"I should like to be absent in the autumn too, but——"

"It's out of the question, Mr. Eames."

Then John Eames reflected that it behoved him in such an emergency to fire off his big gun. He had a great dislike to firing this big gun, but, as he said to himself, there are occasions which make a big gun very necessary. "I got a letter from Lord De Guest this morning, pressing me very much to go to him at Easter. It's about business," added Johnny. "If there was any difficulty, he said, he should write to you."

"Write to me," said Sir Raffle, who did not like to be approached too familiarly in his office, even by an earl.

"Of course I shouldn't tell him to do that. But, Sir Raffle, if I remained out there, in the office," and Johnny pointed towards the big room with his head, "I could choose April for my month. And as the matter is so important to me, and to the earl—"

"What can it be?" said Sir Raffle.

"It's quite private," said John Eames.

Hereupon Sir Raffle became very petulant, feeling that a bargain was being made with him. This young man would only consent to become his private secretary upon certain terms! "Well; go in to FitzHoward now. I can't lose all my day in this way."

"But I shall be able to get away at Easter?"

"I don't know. We shall see about it. But don't stand talking there now." Then John Eames went into FitzHoward's room and received that gentleman's congratulations on his appointment. "I hope you like being rung for, like a servant, every minute, for he's always ringing that bell. And he'll roar at you till you're deaf. You must give up all dinner engagements, for though there is not much to do, he'll never let you go. I don't think anybody ever asks him out to dinner, for he likes being here till seven. And you'll have to write all manner of lies about big people. And, sometimes, when he has sent Rafferty out about his private business, he'll ask you to bring him his shoes." Now Rafferty was the First Commissioner's messenger.

It must be remembered, however, that this little account was given by an outgoing and discomfited private secretary. "A man is not asked to bring another man his shoes," said Eames to himself, "until he shows himself fit for that sort of business." Then he made within his own breast a little resolution about Sir Raffle's shoes.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

### THE NEW PRIVATE SECRETARY.

MY DEAR LORD DE GUEST.

*Income-Tax Office, April 8, 18—*

I HARDLY know how to answer your letter, it is so very kind,—more than kind. And about not writing before. I must explain that I have not liked to trouble you with letters. I should have seemed to be encroaching if I had written much. Indeed it didn't come from not thinking about you. And first of all, about the



money,—as to your offer, I mean. I really feel that I do not know what I ought to say to you about it, without appearing to be a simpleton. The truth is, I don't know what I ought to do, and can only trust to you not to put me wrong. I have an idea that a man ought not to accept a present of money, unless from his father, or somebody like that. And the sum you mention is so very large that it makes me wish you had not named it. If you choose to be so generous, would it not be better that you should leave it me in your will?

"So that he might always want me to be dying," said Lord De Guest, as he read the letter out loud to his sister.

"I'm sure he wouldn't want that," said Lady Julia. "But you may live for twenty-five years, you know."

"Say fifty," said the earl. And then he continued the reading of his letter.

But all that depends so much upon another person, that it is hardly worth while talking about it. Of course I am very much obliged to Mr. Dale,—very much indeed, —and I think that he is behaving very handsomely to his niece. But whether it will do me any good, that is quite another thing. However, I shall certainly accept your kind invitation for Easter, and find out whether I have a chance or not. I must tell you that Sir Raffle Buffle has made me his private secretary, by which I get a hundred a year. He says he was a great crony of yours many years ago, and seems to like talking about you very much. You will understand what all that means. He has sent you ever so many messages, but I don't suppose you will care to get them. I am to go to him to-morrow, and from all I hear I shall have a hard time of it.

"By George, he will," said the earl. "Poor fellow!"

"But I thought a private secretary never had anything to do," said Lady Julia.

"I shouldn't like to be private secretary to Sir Raffle, myself. But he's young, and a hundred a year is a great thing. How we all of us used to hate that man. His voice sounded like a bell with a crack in it. We always used to be asking for some one to muffle the Buffle. They call him Huffle Scuffle at his office. Poor Johnny!" Then he finished the letter:—

I told him that I must have leave of absence at Easter, and he at first declared that it was impossible. But I shall carry my point about that. I would not stay away to be made private secretary to the Prime Minister; and yet I almost feel that I might as well stay away for any good that I shall do.

Give my kind regards to Lady Julia, and tell her how very much obliged to her I am. I cannot express the gratitude which I owe to you. But pray believe me, my dear Lord De Guest, always very faithfully yours,

JOHN EAMES.

It was late before Eames had finished his letter. He had been making himself ready for his exodus from the big room, and preparing his desk and papers for his successor. About half-past five Cradell came up to him, and suggested that they should walk home together.

"What! you here still?" said Eames. "I thought you always went at four." Cradell had remained, hanging about the office, in order that he might walk home with the new private secretary. But Eames did not

desire this. He had much of which he desired to think alone, and would fain have been allowed to walk by himself.

"Yes; I had things to do. I say, Johnny, I congratulate you most heartily; I do, indeed."

"Thank you, old fellow!"

"It is such a grand thing, you know. A hundred a year all at once! And then such a snug room to yourself,—and that fellow, Kissing, never can come near you. He has been making himself such a beast all day. But, Johnny, I always knew you'd come to something more than common. I always said so."

"There's nothing uncommon about this; except that Fitz says that old Huffle Scuffle makes himself uncommon nasty."

"Never mind what Fitz says. It's all jealousy. You'll have it all your own way, if you look sharp. I think you always do have it all your own way. Are you nearly ready?"

"Well,—not quite. Don't wait for me, Caudle."

"Oh, I'll wait. I don't mind waiting. They'll keep dinner for us if we both stay. Besides, what matters? I'd do more than that for you."

"I have some idea of working on till eight, and having a chop sent in," said Johnny. "Besides—I've got somewhere to call, by myself."

Then Cradell almost cried. He remained silent for two or three minutes, striving to master his emotion; and at last, when he did speak, had hardly succeeded in doing so. "Oh, Johnny," he said, "I know what that means. You are going to throw me over because you are getting up in the world. I have always stuck to you, through everything; haven't I?"

"Don't make yourself a fool, Caudle."

"Well; so I have. And if they had made me private secretary, I should have been just the same to you as ever. You'd have found no change in me."

"What a goose you are. Do you say I'm changed, because I want to dine in the city?"

"It's all because you don't want to walk home with me, as we used to do. I'm not such a goose but what I can see. But, Johnny—— I suppose I mustn't call you Johnny, now."

"Don't be such a—con—founded——" Then Eames got up, and walked about the room. "Come along," said he, "I don't care about staying, and don't mind where I dine." And he bustled away with his hat and gloves, hardly giving Cradell time to catch him before he got out into the streets. "I tell you what it is, Caudle," said he, "all that kind of thing is disgusting."

"But how would you feel," whimpered Cradell, who had never succeeded in putting himself quite on a par with his friend, even in his own estimation, since that glorious victory at the railway station. If he could only have thrashed *Lupex* as Johnny had thrashed *Crosbie*; then indeed they might have been equal,—a pair of heroes. But he had not

done so. He had never told himself that he was a coward, but he considered that circumstances had been specially unkind to him. "But how would you feel," he whimpered, "if the friend whom you liked better than anybody else in the world, turned his back upon you?"

"I haven't turned my back upon you; except that I can't get you to walk fast enough. Come along, old fellow, and don't talk confounded nonsense. I hate all that kind of thing. You never ought to suppose that a man will give himself airs, but wait till he does. I don't believe I shall remain with old Scuffles above a month or two. From all that I can hear that's as much as any one can bear."

Then Cradell by degrees became happy and cordial, and during the whole walk flattered Eames with all the flattery of which he was master. And Johnny, though he did profess himself to be averse to "all that kind of thing," was nevertheless open to flattery. When Cradell told him that though FitzHoward could not manage the Tartar knight, he might probably do so; he was inclined to believe what Cradell said. "And as to getting him his shoes," said Cradell, "I don't suppose he'd ever think of asking you to do such a thing, unless he was in a very great hurry, or something of that kind."

"Look here, Johnny," said Cradell, as they got into one of the streets bordering on Burton Crescent, "you know the last thing in the world I should like to do would be to offend you."

"All right, Caudle," said Eames, going on, whereas his companion had shown a tendency towards stopping.

"Look here, now; if I have vexed you about Amelia Roper, I'll make you a promise never to speak to her again."

"D— Amelia Roper," said Eames, suddenly stopping himself and stopping Cradell as well. The exclamation was made in a deep angry voice which attracted the notice of one or two who were passing. Johnny was very wrong,—wrong to utter any curse;—very wrong to ejaculate that curse against a human being; and especially wrong to fulminate it against a woman, a woman whom he had professed to love! But he did do so, and I cannot tell my story thoroughly without repeating the wicked word.

Cradell looked up at him and stared. "I only meant to say," said Cradell, "I'll do anything you like in the matter."

"Then never mention her name to me again. And as to talking to her, you may talk to her till you're both blue in the face, if you please."

"Oh;—I didn't know. You didn't seem to like it the other day."

"I was a fool the other day,—a confounded fool. And so I have been all my life. Amelia Roper! Look here, Caudle; if she makes up to you this evening, as I've no doubt she will, for she seems to be playing that game constantly now, just let her have her fling. Never mind me; I'll amuse myself with Mrs. Lupex, or Miss Spruce."

"But there'll be the deuce to pay with Mrs. Lupex. She's as cross as possible already whenever Amelia speaks to me. You don't know

what a jealous woman is, Johnny." Cradell had got upon what he considered to be his high ground. And on that he felt himself equal to any man. It was no doubt true that Eames had thrashed a man, and that he had not; it was true also that Eames had risen to very high place in the social world, having become a private secretary; but for a dangerous, mysterious, overwhelming, life-enveloping intrigue;—was not he the acknowledged hero of such an affair? He had paid very dearly, both in pocket and in comfort, for the blessing of Mrs. Lupex's society; but he hardly considered that he had paid too dearly. There are certain luxuries which a man will find to be expensive; but, for all that, they may be worth their price. Nevertheless as he went up the steps of Mrs. Roper's house he made up his mind that he would oblige his friend. The intrigue might in that way become more mysterious, and more life-enveloping; whereas it would not become more dangerous, seeing that Mr. Lupex could hardly find himself to be aggrieved by such a proceeding.

The whole number of Mrs. Roper's boarders were assembled at dinner that day. Mr. Lupex seldom joined that festive board, but on this occasion he was present, appearing from his voice and manner to be in high good-humour. Cradell had communicated to the company in the drawing-room the great good fortune which had fallen upon his friend, and Johnny had thereby become the mark of a certain amount of hero-worship.

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Roper. "An 'appy woman your mother will be when she hears it. But I always said you'd come down right side uppermost."

"Handsome is as handsome does," said Miss Spruce.

"Oh, Mr. Eames!" exclaimed Mrs. Lupex, with graceful enthusiasm, "I wish you joy from the very depth of my heart. It is such an elegant appointment."

"Accept the hand of a true and disinterested friend," said Lupex. And Johnny did accept the hand, though it was very dirty and stained all over with paint.

Amelia stood apart and conveyed her congratulations by a glance,—or, I might better say, by a series of glances. "And now,—now will you not be mine," the glances said; "now that you are rolling in wealth and prosperity?" And then before they went downstairs she did whisper one word to him. "Oh, I am so happy, John;—so very happy."

"Bother!" said Johnny, in a tone quite loud enough to reach the lady's ear. Then making his way round the room, he gave his arm to Miss Spruce. Amelia, as she walked downstairs alone, declared to herself that she would wring his heart. She had been employed in wringing it for some days past, and had been astonished at her own success. It had been clear enough to her that Eames had been piqued by her overtures to Cradell, and she resolved therefore to play out that game.

"Oh, Mr. Cradell," she said, as she took her seat next to him. "The

friends I like are the friends that remain always the same. I hate your sudden rises. They do so often make a man upsetting."

"I should like to try, myself, all the same," said Cradell.

"Well, I don't think it would make any difference in you; I don't indeed. And of course your time will come too. It's that earl as has done it,—he that was worried by the bull. Since we have known an earl we have been so mighty fine." And Amelia gave her head a little toss, and then smiled archly, in a manner which, to Cradell's eyes, was really very becoming. But he saw that Mrs. Lupex was looking at him from the other side of the table, and he could not quite enjoy the goods which the gods had provided for him.

When the ladies left the dining-room Lupex and the two young men drew their chairs near the fire, and each prepared for himself a moderate potation. Eames made a little attempt at leaving the room, but he was implored by Lupex with such earnest protestation of friendship to remain, and was so weakly fearful of being charged with giving himself airs, that he did as he was desired.

"And here, Mr. Eames, is to your very good health," said Lupex, raising to his mouth a steaming goblet of gin-and-water, "and wishing you many years to enjoy your official prosperity."

"Thank ye," said Eames. "I don't know much about the prosperity, but I'm just as much obliged."

"Yes, sir; when I see a young man of your age beginning to rise in the world, I know he'll go on. Now look at me, Mr. Eames. Mr. Cradell, here's your very good health, and may all unkindness be drowned in the flowing bowl—— Look at me, Mr. Eames. I've never risen in the world; I've never done any good in the world, and never shall."

"Oh, Mr. Lupex, don't say that."

"Ah, but I do say it. I've always been pulling the devil by the tail, and never yet got as much as a good hold on to that. And I'll tell you why; I never got a chance when I was young. If I could have got any big fellow, a star, you know, to let me paint his portrait when I was your age,—such a one, let us say, as your friend Sir Raffle——"

"What a star!" said Cradell.

"Well, I suppose he's pretty much known in the world, isn't he? Or Lord Derby, or Mr. Spurgeon. You know what I mean. If I'd got such a chance as that when I was young, I should never have been doing jobs of scene-painting at the minor theatres at so much a square yard. You've got the chance now, but I never had it." Whereupon Mr. Lupex finished his first measure of gin-and-water.

"It's a very queer thing,—life is," continued Lupex; and, though he did not at once go to work boldly at the mixing of another glass of toddy, he began gradually, and as if by instinct, to finger the things which would be necessary for that operation. "A very queer thing. Now, remember, young gentlemen, I'm not denying that success in life will depend upon good conduct;—of course it does; but, then, how often good conduct

comes from success? Should I have been what I am now, do you suppose, if some big fellow had taken me by the hand when I was struggling to make an artist of myself? I could have drunk claret and champagne just as well as gin-and-water, and worn ruffles to my shirt as gracefully as many a fellow who used to be very fond of me, and now won't speak to me if he meets me in the streets. I never got a chance,—never."

"But it's not too late yet, Mr. Lupex," said Eames.

"Yes, it is, Eames,—yes, it is." And now Mr. Lupex had grasped the gin-bottle. "It's too late now. The game's over, and the match is lost. The talent is here. I'm as sure of that now as ever I was. I've never doubted my own ability,—never for a moment. There are men this very day making a thousand a year off their easels who haven't so good and true an eye in drawing as I have, or so good a feeling in colours. I could name them; only I won't."

"And why shouldn't you try again?" said Eames.

"If I were to paint the finest piece that ever delighted the eye of man, who would come and look at it? Who would have enough belief in me to come as far as this place and see if it were true? No, Eames; I know my own position and my own ways, and I know my own weakness. I couldn't do a day's work now unless I were certain of getting a certain number of shillings at the end of it. That's what a man comes to when things have gone against him."

"But I thought men got lots of money by scene-painting?"

"I don't know what you may call lots, Mr. Cradell; I don't call it lots. But I'm not complaining. I know who I have to thank; and if ever I blow my own brains out I shan't be putting the blame on the wrong shoulders. If you'll take my advice,"—and now he turned round to Eames,—“you'll beware of marrying too soon in life.”

"I think a man should marry early, if he marries well," said Eames.

"Don't misunderstand me," continued Lupex. "It isn't about Mrs. L. I'm speaking. I've always regarded my wife as a very fascinating woman."

"Hear, hear, hear!" said Cradell, thumping the table.

"Indeed she is," said Eames.

"And when I caution you against marrying, don't you misunderstand me. I've never said a word against her to any man, and never will. If a man don't stand by his wife, who will he stand by? I blame no one but myself. But I do say this; I never had a chance;—I never had a chance;—never had a chance." And as he repeated the words for the third time, his lips were already fixed to the rim of his tumbler.

At this moment the door of the dining-room was opened, and Mrs. Lupex put in her head.

"Lupex," she said, "what are you doing?"

"Yes, my dear. I can't say I'm doing anything at the present moment. I was giving a little advice to these young gentlemen."



"Mr. Cradell, I wonder at you. And, Mr. Eames, I wonder at you, too,—in your position! Lupey, come upstairs at once." She then stepped into the room and secured the gin-bottle.

"Oh, Mr. Cradell, do come here," said Amelia, in her liveliest tone, as soon as the men made their appearance above. "I've been waiting for you this half-hour. I've got such a puzzle for you." And she made way for him to a chair which was between herself and the wall. Cradell looked half afraid of his fortunes as he took the proffered seat; but he did take it, and was soon secured from any positive physical attack by the strength and breadth of Miss Roper's crinoline.

"Dear me! Here's a change," said Mrs. Lupey, out loud.

Johnny Eames was standing close, and whispered into her ear, "Changes are so pleasant sometimes! Don't you think so? I do."

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### NEMESIS.

CROSBIE had now settled down to the calm realities of married life, and was beginning to think that the odium was dying away which for a week or two had attached itself to him, partly on account of his usage of Miss Dale, but more strongly in consequence of the thrashing which he had received from John Eames. Not that he had in any way recovered his former tone of life, or that he ever hoped to do so. But he was able to go in and out of his club without embarrassment. He could talk with his wonted voice, and act with his wonted authority at his office. He could tell his friends, with some little degree of pleasure in the sound, that Lady Alexandrina would be very happy to see them. And he could make himself comfortable in his own chair after dinner, with his slippers and his newspaper. He could make himself comfortable,—or at any rate could tell his wife that he did so.

It was very dull. He was obliged to acknowledge to himself, when he thought over the subject, that the life which he was leading was dull. Though he could go into his club without annoyance, nobody there ever thought of asking him to join them at dinner. It was taken for granted that he was going to dine at home; and in the absence of any provocation to the contrary he always did dine at home. He had now been in his house for three weeks and had been asked with his wife to a few bridal dinner-parties, given chiefly by friends of the De Courcy family. Except on such occasions he never passed an evening out of his own house, and had not yet, since his marriage, dined once away from his wife. He told himself that his good conduct in this respect was the result of his own resolution; but, nevertheless, he felt that there was nothing else left for him to do. Nobody asked him to go to the theatre.

Nobody begged him to drop in of an evening. Men never asked him why he did not play a rubber. He would generally saunter into Sebright's after he left his office, and lounge about the room for half an hour, talking to a few men. Nobody was uncivil to him. But he knew that the whole thing was changed, and he resolved, with some wisdom, to accommodate himself to his altered circumstances.

Lady Alexandrina also found her new life rather dull, and was sometimes inclined to be a little querulous. She would tell her husband that she never got out, and would declare, when he offered to walk with her, that she did not care for walking in the streets. "I don't exactly see, then, where you are to walk," he once replied. She did not tell him that she was fond of riding, and that the Park was a very fitting place for such exercise; but she looked it, and he understood her. "I'll do all I can for her," he said to himself; "but I'll not ruin myself." "Amelia is coming to take me for a drive," she said another time. "Ah, that'll be very nice," he answered. "No; it won't be very nice," said Alexandrina. "Amelia is always shopping and bargaining with the tradespeople. But it will be better than being kept in the house without ever stirring out."

They breakfasted nominally at half-past nine; in truth, it was always nearly ten, as Lady Alexandrina found it difficult to get herself out of her room. At half-past ten punctually he left his house for his office. He usually got home by six, and then spent the greatest part of the hour before dinner in the ceremony of dressing. He went, at least, into his dressing-room, after speaking a few words to his wife, and there remained, pulling things about, clipping his nails, looking over any paper that came in his way, and killing the time. He expected his dinner punctually at seven, and began to feel a little cross if he were kept waiting. After dinner, he drank one glass of wine in company with his wife, and one other by himself, during which latter ceremony he would stare at the hot coals, and think of the thing he had done. Then he would go upstairs and have, first, a cup of coffee, and then a cup of tea. He would read his newspaper, open a book or two, hide his face when he yawned, and try to make believe that he liked it. She had no signs or words of love for him. She never sat on his knee, or caressed him. She never showed him that any happiness had come to her in being allowed to live close to him. They thought that they loved each other;—each thought so; but there was no love, no sympathy, no warmth. The very atmosphere was cold;—so cold that no fire could remove the chill.

In what way would it have been different had Lily Dale sat opposite to him there as his wife, instead of Lady Alexandrina? He told himself frequently that either with one or with the other life would have been the same; that he had made himself for a while unfit for domestic life, and that he must cure himself of that unfitness. But though he declared this to himself in one set of half-spoken thoughts, he would also declare to himself in another set, that Lily would have made the whole house bright with her brightness; that had he brought her home to his hearth,

there would have been a sun shining on him every morning and every evening. But nevertheless, he strove to do his duty, and remembered that the excitement of official life was still open to him. From eleven in the morning till five in the afternoon he could still hold a position which made it necessary that men should regard him with respect, and speak to him with deference. In this respect he was better off than his wife, for she had no office to which she could betake herself.

"Yes," she said to Amelia, "it is all very nice, and I don't mind the house being damp; but I get so tired of being alone."

"That must be the case with women who are married to men of business."

"Oh, I don't complain. Of course I knew what I was about. I suppose it won't be so very dull when everybody is up in London."

"I don't find the season makes much difference to us after Christmas," said Amelia; "but no doubt London is gayer in May. You'll find you'll like it better next year; and perhaps you'll have a baby, you know."

"Psha!" ejaculated Lady Alexandrina; "I don't want a baby, and don't suppose I shall have one."

"It's always something to do, you know."

Lady Alexandrina, though she was not of an energetic temperament, could not but confess to herself that she had made a mistake. She had been tempted to marry Crosbie because Crosbie was a man of fashion, and now she was told that the London season would make no difference to her;—the London season which had hitherto always brought to her the excitement of parties, if it had not given her the satisfaction of amusement. She had been tempted to marry at all because it appeared to her that a married woman could enjoy society with less restraint than a girl who was subject to her mother or her chaperon; that she would have more freedom of action as a married woman; and now she was told that she must wait for a baby before she could have anything to do. Courcy Castle was sometimes dull, but Courcy Castle would have been better than this.

When Crosbie returned home after this little conversation about the baby, he was told by his wife that they were to dine with the Gazebees on the next Sunday. On hearing this he shook his head with vexation. He knew, however, that he had no right to make complaint, as he had been only taken to St. John's Wood once since they had come home from their marriage trip. There was, however, one point as to which he could grumble. "Why, on earth, on Sunday?"

"Because Amelia asked me for Sunday. If you are asked for Sunday, you cannot say you'll go on Monday."

"It is so terrible on a Sunday afternoon. At what hour?"

"She said half-past five."

"Heavens and earth! What are we to do all the evening?"

"It is not kind of you, Adolphus, to speak in that way of my relations."

"Come, my love, that's a joke; as if I hadn't heard you say the same

thing twenty times. You've complained of having to go up there much more bitterly than I ever did. You know I like your sister, and, in his way, Gazebee is a very good fellow; but after three or four hours, one begins to have had enough of him."

"It can't be much duller than it is——;" but Lady Alexandrina stopped herself before she finished her speech.

"One can always read at home, at any rate," said Crosbie.

"One can't always be reading. However, I have said you would go. If you choose to refuse, you must write and explain."

When the Sunday came the Crosbies of course did go to St. John's Wood, arriving punctually at that door which he so hated at half-past five. One of the earliest resolutions which he made when he first contemplated the De Courcy match, was altogether hostile to the Gazebees. He would see but very little of them. He would shake himself free of that connexion. It was not with that branch of the family that he desired an alliance. But now, as things had gone, that was the only branch of the family with which he seemed to be allied. He was always hearing of the Gazebees. Amelia and Alexandrina were constantly together. He was now dragged there to a Sunday dinner; and he knew that he should often be dragged there,—that he could not avoid such draggings. He already owed money to Mortimer Gazebee, and was aware that his affairs had been allowed to fall into that lawyer's hands in such a way that he could not take them out again. His house was very thoroughly furnished, and he knew that the bills had been paid; but he had not paid them; every shilling had been paid through Mortimer Gazebee.

"Go with your mother and aunt, De Courcy," the attorney said to the lingering child after dinner; and then Crosbie was left alone with his wife's brother-in-law. This was the period of the St. John's Wood purgatory which was so dreadful to him. With his sister-in-law he could talk, remembering perhaps always that she was an earl's daughter. But with Gazebee he had nothing in common. And he felt that Gazebee, who had once treated him with great deference, had now lost all such feeling. Crosbie had once been a man of fashion in the estimation of the attorney, but that was all over. Crosbie, in the attorney's estimation, was now simply the secretary of a public office,—a man who owed him money. The two had married sisters, and there was no reason why the light of the prosperous attorney should pale before that of the civil servant, who was not very prosperous. All this was understood thoroughly by both the men.

"There's terrible bad news from Courcy," said the attorney, as soon as the boy was gone.

"Why; what's the matter?"

"Porlock has married;—that woman, you know."

"Nonsense."

"He has. The old lady has been obliged to tell me, and she's nearly broken-hearted about it. But that's not the worst of it to my mind. All

the world knows that Porloch had gone to the mischief. But he is going to bring an action against his father for some arrears of his allowance, and he threatens to have everything out in court, if he doesn't get his money."

"But is there money due to him?"

"Yes, there is. A couple of thousand pounds or so. I suppose I shall have to find it. But, upon my honour, I don't know where it's to come from; I don't, indeed. In one way or another, I've paid over fourteen hundred pounds for you."

"Fourteen hundred pounds!"

"Yes, indeed;—what with the insurance and the furniture, and the bill from our house for the settlements. That's not paid yet, but it's the same thing. A man doesn't get married for nothing, I can tell you."

"But you've got security."

"Oh, yes; I've got security. But the thing is the ready money. Our house has advanced so much on the Courcy property, that they don't like going any further; and therefore it is that I have to do this myself. They'll all have to go abroad,—that'll be the end of it. There's been such a scene between the earl and George. George lost his temper and told the earl that Porlock's marriage was his fault. It has ended in George with his wife being turned out."

"He has money of his own."

"Yes, but he won't spend it. He's coming up here, and we shall find him hanging about us. I don't mean to give him a bed here, and I advise you not to do so either. You'll not get rid of him if you do."

"I have the greatest possible dislike to him."

"Yes; he's a bad fellow. So is John. Porlock was the best, but he's gone altogether to ruin. They've made a nice mess of it between them; haven't they?"

This was the family for whose sake Crosbie had jilted Lily Dale! His single and simple ambition had been that of being an earl's son-in-law. To achieve that it had been necessary that he should make himself a villain. In achieving it he had gone through all manner of dirt and disgrace. He had married a woman whom he knew he did not love. He was thinking almost hourly of a girl whom he had loved, whom he did love, but whom he had so injured, that, under no circumstances, could he be allowed to speak to her again. The attorney there, who sat opposite to him, talking about his thousands of pounds with that disgusting assumed solicitude which such men put on, when they know very well what they are doing, had made a similar marriage. But he had known what he was about. He had got from his marriage all that he had expected. But what had Crosbie got?

"They're a bad set,—a bad set," said he in his bitterness.

"The men are," said Gazebee, very comfortably.

"H—m," said Crosbie. It was manifest to Gazebee that his friend was expressing a feeling that the women also were not all that they

should be, but he took no offence, though some portion of the censure might thereby be supposed to attach to his own wife.

"The countess means well," said Gazebee. "But she's had a hard life of it,—a very hard life. I've heard him call her names that would frighten a coalheaver. I have, indeed. But he'll die soon, and then she'll be comfortable. She has three thousand a year jointure."

He'll die soon, and then she'll be comfortable! That was one phase of married life. As Crosbie's mind dwelt upon the words he remembered Lily's promise made in the fields, that she would do everything for him. He remembered her kisses; the touch of her fingers; the low silvery laughing voice; the feel of her dress as she would press close to him. After that he reflected whether it would not be well that he too should die, so that Alexandrina might be comfortable. She and her mother might be very comfortable together, with plenty of money, at Baden Baden!

The squire at Allington, and Mrs. Dale, and Lady Julia De Guest, had been, and still were, uneasy in their minds because no punishment had fallen upon Crosbie,—no vengeance had overtaken him in consequence of his great sin. How little did they know about it! Could he have been prosecuted and put into prison, with hard labour, for twelve months, the punishment would not have been heavier. He would in that case, at any rate, have been saved from Lady Alexandrina.

"George and his wife are coming up to town; couldn't we ask them to come to us for a week or so?" said his wife to him, as soon as they were in the fly together, going home.

"No," shouted Crosbie; "we will do no such thing." There was not another word said on the subject,—nor on any other subject till they got home. When they reached their house Alexandrina had a headache, and went up to her room immediately. Crosbie threw himself into a chair before the remains of a fire in the dining-room, and resolved that he would cut the whole De Courcy family together. His wife, as his wife, should obey him. She should obey him,—or else leave him and go her way by herself, leaving him to go his way. There was an income of twelve hundred a year. Would it not be a fine thing for him if he could keep six hundred for himself and return to his old manner of life. All his old comforts of course he would not have,—nor the old esteem and regard of men. But the luxury of a club dinner he might enjoy. Unembarrassed evenings might be his,—with liberty to him to pass them as he pleased. He knew many men who were separated from their wives, and who seemed to be as happy as their neighbours. And then he remembered how ugly Alexandrina had been this evening, wearing a great tinsel coronet full of false stones, with a cold in her head which had reddened her nose. There had, too, fallen upon her in these her married days a certain fixed dreary drowsiness. She certainly was very plain! So he said to himself, and then he went to bed. I myself am inclined to think that his punishment was sufficiently severe.

The next morning his wife still complained of headache, so that he



breakfasted alone. Since that positive refusal which he had given to her proposition for inviting her brother, there had not been much conversation between them. "My head is splitting, and Sarah shall bring some tea and toast up to me, if you will not mind it."

He did not mind it in the least, and ate his breakfast by himself, with more enjoyment than usually attended that meal.

It was clear to him that all the present satisfaction of his life must come to him from his office work. There are men who find it difficult to live without some source of daily comfort, and he was such a man. He could hardly endure his life unless there were some page in it on which he could look with gratified eyes. He had always liked his work, and he now determined that he would like it better than ever. But in order that he might do so it was necessary that he should have much of his own way. According to the theory of his office, it was incumbent on him as Secretary simply to take the orders of the Commissioners, and see that they were executed; and to such work as this his predecessor had strictly confined himself. But he had already done more than this, and had conceived the ambition of holding the Board almost under his thumb. He flattered himself that he knew his own work and theirs better than they knew either, and that by a little management he might be their master. It is not impossible that such might have been the case had there been no fracas at the Paddington station; but, as we all know, the dominant cock of the farmyard must be ever dominant. When he shall once have had his wings so smeared with mud as to give him even the appearance of adversity, no other cock will ever respect him again. Mr. Optimist and Mr. Butterwell knew very well that their secretary had been cudgelled, and they could not submit themselves to a secretary who had been so treated.

"Oh, by-the-by, Crosbie," said Butterwell, coming into his room, soon after his arrival at his office on that day of his solitary breakfast, "I want to say just a few words to you." And Butterwell turned round and closed the door, the lock of which had not previously been fastened. Crosbie, without much thinking, immediately foretold himself the nature of the coming conversation.

"Do you know——" said Butterwell, beginning.

"Sit down, won't you?" said Crosbie, seating himself as he spoke. If there was to be a contest, he would make the best fight he could. He would show a better spirit here than he had done on the railway platform. Butterwell did sit down, and felt, as he did so, that the very motion of sitting took away some of his power. He ought to have sent for Crosbie into his own room. A man, when he wishes to reprimand another, should always have the benefit of his own atmosphere.

"I don't want to find any fault," Butterwell began.

"I hope you have not any cause," said Crosbie.

"No, no; I don't say that I have. But we think at the Board——"

"Stop, stop, Butterwell. If anything unpleasant is coming, it had

better come from the Board. I should take it in better spirit; I should, indeed."

"What takes place at the Board must be official."

"I shall not mind that in the least. I should rather like it than otherwise."

"It simply amounts to this,—that we think you are taking a little too much on yourself. No doubt, it's a fault on the right side, and arises from your wishing to have the work well done."

"And if I don't do it, who will?" asked Crosbie.

"The Board is very well able to get through all that appertains to it. Come, Crosbie, you and I have known each other a great many years, and it would be a pity that we should have any words. I have come to you in this way because it would be disagreeable to you to have any question raised officially. Optimist isn't given to being very angry, but he was downright angry yesterday. You had better take what I say in good part, and go along a little quieter."

But Crosbie was not in a humour to take anything quietly. He was sore all over, and prone to hit out at everybody that he met. "I have done my duty to the best of my ability, Mr. Butterwell," he said, "and I believe I have done it well. I believe I know my duty here as well as any one can teach me. If I have done more than my share of work, it is because other people have done less than theirs." As he spoke, there was a black cloud upon his brow, and the Commissioner could perceive that the Secretary was very wrathful.

"Oh! very well," said Butterwell, rising from his chair. "I can only, under such circumstances, speak to the Chairman, and he will tell you what he thinks at the Board. I think you're foolish; I do, indeed. As for myself, I have only meant to act kindly by you." After that, Mr. Butterwell took himself off.

On the same afternoon, Crosbie was summoned into the board-room in the usual way, between two and three. This was a daily occurrence, as he always sat for about an hour with two out of the three Commissioners, after they had fortified themselves with a biscuit and a glass of sherry. On the present occasion, the usual amount of business was transacted, but it was done in a manner which made Crosbie feel that they did not all stand together on their usual footing. The three Commissioners were all there. The Chairman gave his directions in a solemn pompous voice, which was by no means usual to him when he was in good humour. The major said little or nothing; but there was a gleam of satisfied sarcasm in his eye. Things were going wrong at the Board, and he was pleased. Mr. Butterwell was exceedingly civil in his demeanour, and rather more than ordinarily brisk. As soon as the regular work of the day was over, Mr. Optimist shuffled about on his chair, rising from his seat, and then sitting down again. He looked through a lot of papers close to his hand, peering at them over his spectacles. Then he selected one, took off his spectacles, leaned back in his chair, and began his little speech.

"Mr. Crosbie," he said, "we are all very much gratified,—very much gratified, indeed,—by your zeal and energy in the service."

"Thank you, sir," said Crosbie; "I am fond of the service."

"Exactly, exactly; we all feel that. But we think that you,—if I were to say take too much upon yourself, I should say, perhaps, more than we mean."

"Don't say more than you mean, Mr. Optimist." Crosbie's eyes, as he spoke, gleamed slightly with his momentary triumph; as did also those of Major Fiasco.

"No, no, no," said Mr. Optimist; "I would say rather less than more to so very good a public servant as yourself. But you, doubtless, understand me?"

"I don't think I do quite, sir. If I have not taken too much on me, what is it that I have done that I ought not to have done?"

"You have given directions in many cases for which you ought first to have received authority. Here is an instance," and the selected paper was at once brought out.

It was a matter in which the Secretary had been manifestly wrong according to written law, and he could not defend it on its own merits.

"If you wish me," said he, "to confine myself exactly to the positive instructions of the office, I will do so; but I think you will find it inconvenient."

"It will be far the best," said Mr. Optimist.

"Very well," said Mr. Crosbie, "it shall be done." And he at once determined to make himself as unpleasant to the three gentlemen in the room as he might find it within his power to do. He could make himself very unpleasant, but the unpleasantness would be as much to him as to them.

Nothing would now go right with him. He could look in no direction for satisfaction. He sauntered into Sebright's, as he went home, but he could not find words to speak to any one about the little matters of the day. He went home, and his wife, though she was up, complained still of her headache.

"I haven't been out of the house all day," she said, "and that has made it worse."

"I don't know how you are to get out, if you won't walk," he answered.

Then there was no more said between them till they sat down to their meal.

Had the squire at Allington known all, he might, I think, have been satisfied with the punishment which Crosbie had encountered.

## Marriage Settlements.

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Of the many differences between French and English novels one of the most striking is to be found in the fulness with which French novelists enter into the business arrangements between their characters, the apparently well-founded confidence which they show in discussing them. To an English novelist, even if he is a novelist of a high class, all such matters are an unknown land. They are passed over in general terms, and every device is used for the purpose of avoiding details. French novelists revel in such things. Perhaps a third of Balzac's stories is filled by minute accounts of the affairs of his characters. He is as fond of financial statements as a chancellor of the exchequer, and when a lady is to be married, he appears to think quite as much of the clauses of the marriage contract as of the marriage itself. Balzac carried this to a length which was almost absurd, but he only exaggerated a taste highly characteristic of his countrymen. One effect of this is that much more is to be learnt from novels about France than about England, and of the facts so to be learnt few are more striking to an English reader than the comparative freedom of action of French married women in all matters of business. In French novels the mother of the heroine, or the heroine herself if married, is always taking an active part in money matters. She invests, she speculates, she makes bargains with her husband or her son-in-law, she buys and sells, and does as she pleases, till the English reader, if not unused to the miseries of trusteeship, wonders how the trustees of her settlement could sleep in their beds without hideous visions of breaches of trust and irate equity judges. His wonder would perhaps be increased if he knew that on the other side of the Channel there are no marriage settlements in our sense of the word, no trustees, and no courts of equity. It may be worth his consideration whether his own adoption of these costly luxuries is wise or not.

When any arrangement has become matter of routine, it ceases with surprising rapidity to be matter of discussion. It becomes part of the regular established course of affairs to which every one submits in his turn, and even if an occasional grumble is heard, the disinclination to take the trouble of considering the matter on principle is so great and general, that until attention is drawn to it by some special instance of individual hardship, or by some speculation which happens to attract notice by its form or power, matters go on as they are for an incalculable time. This is especially true of all customs which are in any way connected with the law. Customary ways of living, customary ways of conducting business, customary prescriptions in medicine, that collection of customs, as to dress,

food, &c., which collectively constitute fashion, and a thousand other customs of the same kind, flourish and fade with a certain degree of quickness. Sometimes they are transitory enough to lead people to speak of their caprice and instability as if these were their most characteristic features, the truth being that they change within a narrow range only, and vary very little indeed beyond that circle. When the law comes in, the strength of custom appears in its full light.

Law is a difficult thing to learn. Men feel a kind of pride in its intricacy when they have learnt it, just as they might in any other out-of-the-way piece of knowledge. Moreover, the law is like the sea. The Atlantic Ocean is an immense place, and might be traversed by ships in any direction; but, in fact, there are but a few narrow bands of it which are so traversed, and the rest is left almost entirely unvisited. So with law. There are millions of actions which are perfectly legal, and millions of arrangements of every sort which people might make if they pleased. There are, however, a very small number of courses which the law actually, and as a matter of fact, has recognized as legal, and of which the legal consequences are thoroughly well known and ascertained. Those few courses of conduct are accordingly followed on all occasions, and whenever the necessity arises for performing any one of the acts to which they relate, the appropriate way of doing it is thoroughly well ascertained, and is as rigidly prescribed by legal custom, as it could be by legal enactment.

These observations are peculiarly appropriate to the case of marriage settlements. When two people are engaged to be married, the business part of the matter is, according to the ordinary phrase, "put into the hands" of a solicitor, or perhaps two, as the case may be, and by them a little private code of laws is drawn up, which no power on earth, short of Parliament, can repeal or alter, which is to regulate some of the most important affairs of the family for a whole generation—during the joint life-time of the persons to be married at least, and possibly for a much longer period. This document is, as a rule, prepared with but little attention to the particular circumstances of the parties, according to certain forms which happen to have come into fashion for such purposes, and which are so managed as to leave those who have to be guided by them singularly little choice as to the course to be taken. The common course where people marry who have money enough to want to have a settlement, and who are not great landed proprietors, is to convey the property to be settled to trustees, who are to invest it either in land, in funds, on mortgage or railway debentures (which is a sort of mortgage), and sometimes in other specified securities, to pay the interest to the husband for life, or sometimes, in the first instance, to the wife for her separate use, with survivorship to the husband, then to the wife for life, and after their death to pay the capital to the children of the marriage on their majority or marriage equally or in such shares as the parents or surviving parent shall appoint; if there are no children, each party can usually dispose by

will of his or her share, and if there is no will, the property is generally given to his or her family. This is the substance of the document, though, by the introduction of all manner of clauses about the appointment of new trustees, the way in which land in settlement is to descend, &c., it is usually swollen to an enormous size, and a price most unsatisfactory to those who have to pay it.

This kind of domestic legislation has become so common, indeed so nearly universal among the comfortable and moderately wealthy classes, that it is insisted on as a matter of course, as a precaution of ordinary prudence, whenever a marriage takes place in those classes. It is as much a part of the business as the wedding breakfast, or anything else connected with the transaction. It has, indeed, become so much a matter of course, that probably very few of the parents whose daughters are married in the course of the year, and not very many of the husbands who marry them, think of the expediency of the arrangement at all, or consider it an open question whether or not the contract is one which ought to be made. Common, however, as it may be, it is not by any means altogether clear that it is wise. It would be rash to give a peremptory opinion as to what ought to be done in such cases, but it may be interesting to consider some points connected with the subject, which are very often passed over unnoticed.

In the first place, it ought to be observed, that every settlement whatever is an evasion of the law of the land. The law is, that, upon marriage, the husband becomes absolutely entitled to his wife's personal property, and entitled to the profits of her real property for her life, or, if a child is born alive of the marriage, for his own life. On the other hand, the wife is entitled to a third of his land for her life, and on his dying intestate, she takes a part of his personal property, varying according to the state of his family. The law as to dower has practically been rendered obsolete by Acts of Parliament and conveyancing subtleties; but, as regards personal property and the real property of the wife, it is still in full force. Such being the law, it is obvious that every marriage settlement evades it, to the prejudice of the husband. Instead of getting his wife's property absolutely, he gets at best only a life-interest in it. Hence the law of the land and the tenor of marriage settlements stand in direct opposition to each other. If one is right, the other must be wrong. Whether either or neither is right is a curious inquiry, on which a few observations will be offered immediately, but the inconvenience of having an opposition between them is not the less real because it is not generally noticed. It consists in the fact that it converts the ordinary course of things into a set of exceptions to a general rule, and the objection to this is that, except in the cases where an exception is made in express words, the general rule applies, often in a most vexatious and mischievous manner. In the early part of Delolme's account of the English Constitution, the author (by birth a foreigner) remarks that during the early part of his residence in England he was



constantly at a loss to understand how English people made out their right to do this, that, and the other thing, which, as a general rule, people were not allowed to do on the Continent. At last he discovered that in England people could do what they pleased, unless there was some express law to prevent them; whereas, as he said, in the continental countries with which he was acquainted, the converse was the case. Whatever may be the case in political affairs, there are many domestic relations in which the exception has become the rule, and the rule has become a mere pitfall to trip people up who have not taken proper care to bar it out in the particular instance. This is the real reason why the law relating to land is so inconceivably complicated, and why its administration is so expensive. In fact, land is, in practice, as much the absolute property of its owner as money. In theory, no subject *owns* land. All the land in England is *held* either of the Queen or of some inferior lord, and in order to understand the technicalities which attend a sale of land, it is necessary to know more or less of the history of the old rules, and of the exceptions nearly co-extensive with them, which have been provided by a long succession of legislatures. If a person is ignorant of these strange subtleties, his title may be endangered, his estate may be lost, or the intention of his will may be defeated, because of some reason, which may, perhaps, have had some force in it five hundred years ago, but which no one in the present day can even understand without a special education. To evade a bad general rule by exceptions nearly co-extensive with it, instead of substituting a reasonable rule, is as if a man, wanting for a particular reason to shut up his house, were to build up the front door, and, instead of re-opening it when the reason ceased to apply, were to construct an elaborate system of ladders, by which you might creep out of the garret window, crawl along the gutter of the roof, descend to the cellar, and come up through the hole where the coals are let in. Such a contrivance would, no doubt, let you into the street at last. It might display a great deal of quaint ingenuity, and it is even possible that it might here and there have an incidental convenience; for instance, at some particular point, it might improve the ventilation of the house, but any sensible man would open his front door at once, instead of repairing the steps of the ladders, making the handrail by the gutter a little stronger, and enlarging the entrance to the coal-cellar.

To apply this to the particular case of marriage settlements, it is obvious that the general law which regulates the effect of marriage on property was established at a time when the whole state of society was different from that in which we live. Land was then the great source of permanent income, and personal property was composed for the most part of agricultural produce, articles of furniture, and ready money. Such things as investments, in our sense of the word, were almost unknown. There were no public funds, no railways; a mortgage was rather an interest in land than a debt secured on land; indeed, the notion of living on the interest of one's money was associated, not with quiet people receiving

dividends with mechanical regularity, but with Jews and usurers squeezing the last farthing from their victims. In such a state of things, it was natural enough to give the husband an absolute title to his wife's personal property. When he took her home to his house, he would, of course, take with her a certain quantity of furniture, plate, money to spend, possibly cattle, and other things; and, being the head of the family, would of course have the entire control over them, and so become their owner in virtue of his marriage. But does the fact, that in a very rude state of things such an arrangement would be natural, supply any reason for providing that when a man marries a woman who has 5,000*l.* a year from the funds, he ought to become the absolute owner of the 5,000*l.* a year, because early lawyers chose to put money debts and pots and pans in the same category, as being both personal property? The solid distinction was not between moveable and immovable property, but between property which supplied a permanent means of livelihood, and property which was liable to be consumed in the act of using it. There would be some sense in saying, the husband shall enjoy the wife's income for life, and shall become absolutely entitled to such of her possessions as he and she would be likely to use in common; but in our days the distinction between income derived from land and income derived from permanent property other than land is one which it is absurd to draw. The feeling that this is so is one, and perhaps the most reasonable, of the grounds on which the practice of making marriage settlements rests. They do put those portions of personal property to which they apply on the same footing on which the law of the land puts landed property; that is, they give the husband control over his wife's income, but not over her capital. If this is a good arrangement, why should it not be the rule instead of the exception? Why should the fact of marriage give the husband a right which he is never in practice allowed to enjoy, and take from the wife what she is never required to concede?

To give the full answer to this question, why this is done, in point of fact, it would be necessary to enter upon a matter far too technical to be advantageously discussed in this place—namely, the nature of the distinction which pervades our law between real and personal property, —a distinction which has done more to render the law intricate and perplexing than almost any other which has been admitted into it. The question whether it ought to be done is of more general interest, and by way of introduction to it, and in illustration of the sort of arrangements which might be made, it may be desirable to give a general outline of the way in which such things are managed in France. This will afford some useful hints as to the principles on which the matter rests.

The French law of marriage, as to the effects which marriage produces upon property, is set forth in the *Code Civile*. The provisions which apply specially to the present subject are contained in the 5th title of the 3rd book, Articles 1,387–1,580. These articles, of course, enter into many details which it would be out of place to mention on the present occasion.

The most general and important of them are as follows:—According to the French law, people may make any arrangements they please as to the effect of marriage on their property so long as they are not immoral, and do not interfere with certain fundamental principles—for instance, the personal rights of the husband over his wife and children. They may, however, declare in general terms that they marry either upon what may be called the partnership system (*régime de la communauté*), or the dower system (*régime dotal*). The partnership system constitutes the common law of France.

According to the partnership system, the fact of marriage makes the husband and wife a firm, the capital of which is composed of all the moveable property possessed by the parties at the time of their marriage, all the moveable property which they acquire during the marriage by succession or gift, and all the immovable property acquired during the marriage. Each party, however, may receive gifts, legacies, or devise separately. The liabilities of the firm consist of all personal debts owing at the time of the marriage, of debts incurred during the marriage by the husband, or by the wife with his consent, and of certain other charges, especially the food of the married persons, and the education and maintenance of their children.

The husband alone manages the property of the firm. He can sell, alienate, or mortgage it, without the consent of the wife. He cannot, however, gratuitously give away landed property, nor the whole, nor a proportion of the moveable property, except for the advancement (*établissement*) of the children of the marriage. The partnership is dissolved by natural or civil death, or by a separation, which may be either a *séparation de biens*, or a *séparation de corps*. The *séparation de biens* may be sued for by the wife if her property is endangered, and if the disorder of her husband's affairs gives reason to fear that his property is not sufficient to satisfy his wife's demands upon him. After such a separation as to property, the wife must contribute to the expenses of the household and to the education of the children, but, subject to this, she manages her property herself, though she may not alienate her land without the husband's consent. The *séparation de corps* resembles the judicial separation known to our own Divorce Court.

Upon the dissolution of the partnership the accounts are taken according to a set of rules prescribed by the code. Each party—the wife first—is repaid the amount to which they were originally entitled. If there is not enough to satisfy the wife's claims, she may charge the separate property of the husband, though he may not charge her separate property, obviously because he, as manager, is responsible for any loss. The surplus profits of the transaction, if any, are divided equally. The husband's liability to debts is, in like manner, greater than the wife's.

This partnership system may be varied in any way that the parties like. Some of the commonest forms of variation are enumerated in the code. They vary the amount to be brought into partnership, and the

degree of liability to be incurred. The marriage may also be contracted on the terms that the parties shall be "*séparés de biens*." In this case the woman retains her property and the full control of it; she is bound, in default of special agreements, to contribute a third of her income to the expenses of the household.

Under the dowry system the dower (*dot*) is defined to be "property brought by the wife to the husband to support the expenses of the marriage." The husband has the management of the dower, though neither he nor his wife, nor both together, can alienate land constituted as a dower, except in two or three specified cases, unless in the marriage contract power to do so is reserved. On the dissolution of the marriage the husband or his heirs may be called upon to repay the dower. In the case of a marriage on the dowry system, the property which is not included in the dower is called "*biens paraphernaux*," and is the separate property of the wife, though she cannot alienate it without the husband's consent.

Any special stipulations consistent with these leading provisions may be made by the contract of marriage.

There is a striking difference between the principles on which these rules are founded and those of our own law; and the contrast between the application of the principles is even more striking. It deserves special notice, because it is almost the only case in which, rightly or not, the French enjoy a greater amount of liberty than we. All the relations between husband and wife in this country are founded on the notion which is embodied in the maxim that husband and wife are one person in law, as explained by the equally quaint but strictly correct proviso—"and the husband is that person." This fundamental doctrine is so rigorously applied in practice, that a married woman in this country would have no proprietary rights at all but for marriage settlements, and the rights which they secure are exercised under the control and supervision of trustees. This constitutes the fundamental difference between English and French marriage settlements. The settlement in England is a device for getting the husband to give up for the sake of his intended wife some of the odious powers which the law confers upon him. The wife says in substance, "Marry me if you will, but I will not be married unless you agree to give up some of the powers which the law gives you, and unless you consent to give third persons the right to hold you to your bargain, and prevent you not only from using your lawful powers, but from abusing the natural influence of a husband to my money prejudice." The French law, speaking broadly, does not merge the wife in the husband, but considers marriage, in so far as its effects on property are concerned, as a contract like any other between two independent persons, each of whom retains his or her rights against the other, or against the world at large, after the marriage has been contracted, subject only to the general or special terms of the contract, as interpreted either by the law of the land or the wishes of the parties.

To compare the effects of these principles on the marriage relation in general would go beyond the limits of the present subject, though it may be observed that the French lawgivers have shown anxiety to establish a system which, whether right or wrong, consults the interests of the poor and of those who have a little money, as well as those of the rich. The English law, on the other hand, makes the wife almost the property of the husband, unless she has money enough to make it worth while to have a settlement.

The first and most striking difference between the two documents is, that an English settlement has trustees and a French contract has none. This difference gives the colour to the whole tenor of each document. Upon a marriage in England the husband surrenders the control, except within very narrow limits, over a part of his own property, and gives up most of the rights which he would otherwise acquire over his wife's property, to third persons, selected for the purpose, who are interposed between the husband and wife for their own benefit, as it is supposed, and for the benefit of their future children. The trustees prevent the married persons (the word *époux*, which has no English equivalent, is very convenient) from investing their property except in certain specified ways; they prevent them from trenching on the capital except for specified purposes, such as the education and advancement of the children, subject to the consent of the trustees; and finally, they preserve the prospective interests of the children when they marry or come of age. In a French marriage there is nothing answering to this. The parties contract directly with each other, without the intervention of trustees (who are almost, if not altogether, unknown to French law), and the contract is enforced by the ordinary tribunals, as in other cases. Under the *régime de communauté* the arrangement is that, subject to special stipulations, the husband and wife shall form a partnership, the husband to be the managing partner, and to account to the wife, in person if necessary, or by his representatives if she survives him, to their children, or her heirs, if he survives her. Under the *régime dotal*, the bargain is, that, in order to assist the husband to pay the expenses of the marriage, the wife or her family will pay the husband a sum of money, which he is to manage during the marriage, and for which he or his representatives are liable to her representatives after the marriage. If "the dower is in danger," he is liable at any time to be called to account as to his proceedings. Under either system the parents may, during their life-time, advance their children, but the interest of the children on the death of the parents is provided for, not as with us by clauses in the settlement, but by the general law as to inheritances.

The result of this is, that the husband and wife together, and in most cases the husband alone, has the entire management of the property, subject to such supervision as the courts may exercise over his proceedings at her instigation. No third person has a right to interfere between them; the wife is assumed to be competent to take care of her own

interests with the ordinary assistance of the courts of law; and the arrangements made by the law itself are presumed to be those which, subject to special modifications to meet particular cases, ought to subsist between married people. In a word, the French marriage contract is an instrument designed to apply the general law to the particular case. The English settlement is an instrument devised for the purpose of withdrawing the particular case from the general law, and putting it under a different law made for the occasion.

In comparing the merits of the two systems, it is right to observe that the presumption is in favour of the French system, because it harmonizes with the law, and allows an incomparably larger amount of liberty, and it is self-evident that the burden of proving a restraint to be beneficial is upon those who impose it. What, then, are the grounds upon which the restraints imposed by the English system may be justified, and how far are those grounds sound? Why should the management and control of a certain part of the property of the husband and of the property of the wife be transferred from the parties principally interested to trustees? Different reasons may be alleged in favour of different kinds of settlements. The case, for instance, in which one of the parties to a marriage is possessed of a great landed estate, which may almost be said to rank amongst the institutions of the country, is peculiar. Whether the existence of such estates is beneficial to the public, may perhaps be a question, but it is an entirely different question from that which is here considered. Assuming, however—and the assumption is perfectly safe—that whatever may be the merits of such a state of things, it will continue to exist, and that the laws which regulate real property will not, for the present at least, be fundamentally revolutionized, it appears hardly possible to doubt that marriage settlements relating to such estates must continue, for various technical reasons, to be framed as they are at present.

Setting these cases aside, and considering the case of those who live upon personal property, it is often said that if a woman marries a trader it is highly important that she and her children should be protected against the possibility that he may be ruined by speculation. This, however, involves no necessity for our machinery of trusts. If people could marry here, as in France, *en biens séparés*, the wife's protection as to her own property against the husband's debts would be complete. It is a very serious question whether it is desirable that she should be able to have any further protection. A man in England may marry and may settle every shilling he has in the world on his wife for her separate use. He may live handsomely, or even splendidly, on their common income, no human being knowing to whom it belongs. On the credit obtained by the appearance thus kept up he may speculate as recklessly as he pleases, and having refreshed himself in the bankruptcy court he may inform his creditors that he owns nothing at all, that he is supported entirely by his wife's charity, and that he hopes that their wives are equally charitable and equally rich. How far such an arrangement would be possible in



France we do not profess to know, but, speaking broadly, the French law seems to be wise in not favouring such schemes. If a woman marries a man in business, that is no reason why her fortune should be embarked in the business, and it may be very right to enable her by a simple declaration to protect it from his engagements; but why should she and the common children of the marriage be protected from the natural effects of the husband's imprudent management of his own fortune? The fact that a man is in a speculative trade, the fact that he is in trade at all, the fact that he is rash or imprudent, may be a very good reason for refusing to marry him; but to want to marry a speculator without suffering for the failure of his speculations, a trader without sharing to some extent the vicissitudes of his trade, an imprudent man without being injured by his imprudence, is to wish to play at the game of "heads I win, tails you lose;" it is to try to eat your cake and have your cake.

This remark applies with still greater force to settlements made on the marriage of persons not in trade; professional men, for example, or those who live on official or other fixed incomes. Why should a man of this class and his wife be prevented from managing their own money in their own way? A doctor with a fair practice marries a woman, say with 10,000*l*. In England, if he had no private fortune, he would probably be called upon to insure his life, and to assign the policy and the 10,000*l*. to trustees on the trusts shortly described above. Under the French law he would have the entire management of the property on the terms above described. The position of the husband would obviously be better under the French law, but in what respect and under what circumstances would the position of the wife be better under the English law?

It may be said, first, that the investment clauses of the settlement secure her and give security to her parents, or those who are interested in her prosperity, that she shall have the advantage of a fair income derived from her property during her marriage; that the money shall not be squandered either in extravagant living or in rash speculation, and that there shall be something at all events to provide for the children of the marriage. It might be said—May not this man, if he gets the control of the money, dispose of it in fifty ways, and either coax or bully his wife into not interfering with his proceedings. If that happens, what will become of the children of the marriage? They will be reduced to poverty. All this sounds extremely plausible, especially in the ears of parents who do not share their daughter's enthusiasm for an accepted lover, and if courtship were the permanent state of things, if the lady were to remain all her life a girl of twenty-one or twenty-two, if the man were always to be a young gentleman with M.D. just tacked to his name, with uncertain prospects, and, above all, invested with a character as unpleasant to the old people as it is interesting to the young ones, it might be all very well. Time, however, does not stand still. Some years, to use the novelist's phrase, "elapse." The marriage turns out well. The wife's parents are dead. Her interests and wishes centre in her husband and children.

He is a prudent, active man, and he has opportunities, which in his judgment, and in hers too, it would be of the utmost importance to the whole family to seize, of employing part of his wife's fortune in some particular way. Be the advantage never so great, be the necessity what it may, the trustees are bound by the express words of the settlement, and, unless they specifically authorize the use proposed to be made of the money, the thing cannot be done. A man and his wife thus find a set of trustees, who know and care comparatively little about them, their family and their affairs, constantly interposed between them and their own money. This is very unpleasant for the trustees, most vexatious to the parents, and if the parents are people of sense and have the ordinary inclination to consult the interest of their children, it is most disadvantageous for the children.

For instance, in the case supposed, the husband finds that his professional prospects in England are bad, but that there is an excellent opening for him at Sydney. He is most anxious to go to Sydney for other reasons: it would suit his wife's health; his and her nearest friends are settled there, &c. It would obviously be the part of a prudent man to go to Sydney, to spend part of the 10,000*l.* in getting there; to furnish a house with another part of it; and very possibly to invest the rest in mortgage or Government securities in New South Wales, where the rate of interest is considerably higher than in England. Under the French system, our physician could do all this without asking any one's leave. Under the English system he would probably be unable to apply one penny of his wife's money to any one of these purposes. He would have to borrow money for the purpose, on the security of his life-interest in the income, and submit to all the collateral vexation and expense of life insurance, &c.; in short, he would probably be unable to go at all.

This is but one instance of a hundred thousand. It may, indeed, be laid down as a general rule, which is almost self-evident if it is attended to, that an English marriage settlement of the kind in question is useful only in those cases in which the marriage itself was a mistake. If a man is such a fool as not to be fit to manage his own property, or such a brute as to be indifferent to the interests of his wife and children, and if his wife has so little character that she can neither gain his affections nor influence his conduct, nor appeal to a court of law for protection for herself and her children, the English system is, to some extent, better than the French. But to what extent, even in this case, is it better? It is quite true that under ordinary settlements it is difficult, if not impossible, to invest the settlement funds in an unsafe manner; but the husband may part with his life-interest in the income. A man of thirty, who is entitled to the interest of 10,000*l.* for his life, may get a round sum for it paid down; and suppose he squanders it, what is to become of the family till he dies? His wife may be of about the same age, and she, at all events, will get nothing till his death. His children will get something on the death of both their parents, but by that time, in all

probability, they would have got more harm from a long interval of poverty than the sum of money to which they might ultimately be entitled would ever repay. Nay, the sum itself may be diminished by the use of the power of advancement which most settlements contain, and if a father and his grown-up children wished to combine to defraud a settlement and to defeat its objects, and had confidence in each other, they might contrive ways of doing so. Even then, in the extreme case just put, a settlement is an imperfect security, but it is surely self-evident that if a woman marries a brute and a fool, she must expect to be miserable, and her children will be wretched too.

The truth is that a large proportion of English marriage settlements are made in obedience to a sentiment which, though quite intelligible and far from unnatural, ought not to be encouraged. Marriage gives the husband, from the very nature of the case, almost unlimited power over the wife's happiness, and indeed over her character and herself, and parents naturally see in their daughters' lovers men who are about to destroy all the authority which they have hitherto exercised, to weaken very greatly some of the closest ties of affection, to put new elements—elements of which the parents may totally disapprove—into the characters which they have educated, and to a great extent framed, and, over and above that, to exercise a sort of despotism over their persons and property, except in so far as the stipulations of a settlement may restrain them. A man is naturally jealous of all this in the highest degree, and the marriage settlement is the only channel through which his jealousy can find an open vent. He and his lawyer frame it with the unexpressed and hardly conscious conviction—for the lawyer is always a man of routine, and the father's feelings are excited—that they are taking precautions against an enemy. Mind he does not speculate, mind he does not waste the money, mind he does not rob the children; don't leave anything to my daughter's discretion—she is so infatuated with this fellow, who seems to me nothing particular, that she would give her eyes out of her head if he asked her; tie him up hand and foot, and get every farthing out of him that you possibly can. These, not in words, but in tone and spirit, are the instructions which men usually give to the attorney who frames their daughters' settlements. They forget, or rather they do not like to remember, that when all is said and done, the husband will be nearer and dearer to the wife than the father or mother; that the presumption is, that he will care much more for her than they do, and a thousand times more for her children; that in all probability he will know his own business best; that, in tying his hands, they are tying hands that would be used for her service in circumstances which cannot possibly be foreseen; and that if the horse really requires such elaborate kicking straps and martingales, he had better not be put into harness at all. No conditions that can be framed can prevent a husband from destroying his wife's happiness, debauching her mind, making her children scoundrels and outcasts, ruining their name, their character, and their very souls, and when a man is freely

allowed to do all this without restraint, is it not rather straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel to prevent his investing her money, except in government securities, or on mortgage of freehold estates in England?

In applying these views to practice, it must always be remembered that, though the existing law and the practice founded upon it may be very inconvenient, though they imply a low view of the relation between husband and wife, and a low estimate of the sense and spirit of married women, they go together, and it is nearly impossible to alter the one without altering the other. So long as the law is what it is, it is simply impossible for the friends of a lady about to marry to allow her to marry without any settlement at all, as the effect of doing so would be to make a present of the whole of her property to her husband, leaving her wholly dependent on him. If she had a right to be considered as his partner, if she could sue him during the marriage, or sue his executors after his death, as a French wife can, for an account of the partnership funds, she might be trusted to take care of herself. A grown-up woman ought to be, and generally is, fully able to protect herself and her children from force or fraud, and there is no reason for interfering with the legitimate influence which an affectionate husband acquires over his wife. If she wishes to spend part of her fortune, or even the whole of it, in helping him in his necessities, why should she be prevented beforehand from doing so? Why should it be supposed that her relations will understand her interests before marriage better than she will understand them afterwards? As matters actually stand, however, a settlement is the only protection available against a state of the law which is most oppressive, and though it is an awkward and cumbrous one, it can hardly be dispensed with. The only practical advice which can be given to persons about to marry, so long as the law remains unaltered, is to make the investment clause as wide as possible, to prevent the attorneys on the one side and the other from viewing the parties to the marriage as natural enemies, likely to abuse their powers to the utmost to each other's disadvantage, utterly unfit to be trusted with the management of their own affairs, and likely to care far less for the interests of their children when they are actually born than the possible grandfathers and grandmothers before they are thought of. Let them remember, in a word, that if the marriage is a happy one, the settlement will be a mere nuisance; whilst if the marriage is unhappy, the settlement at best may be a trifling alleviation of part of the misery which such a marriage will involve.

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## Colours of the Double Stars.

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Hither, when all the deep unsounded skies  
 Shuddered with silent stars, she clomb,  
 And as with optic glasses her keen eyes  
 Pierced thro' the mystic dome,  
 Regions of lucid matter taking forms,  
 Brushes of fire, hazy gleams,  
 Clusters and beds of worlds, and bee-like swarms  
 Of suns, and starry streams.  
 She saw the snowy poles of moonless Mars,  
 That marvellous round of milky light  
 Below Orion, and those double stars  
 Whereof the one more bright  
 Is circled by the other.

TENNYSON.

If the stars be observed on a clear night, it will be seen that they shine with different colours. The most noticeable hues are red, white, and yellow; no stars exhibit a distinct blue or green colour, though some have a bluish or greenish tinge. In our Northern latitudes, where the air is scarcely ever free from haze and vapour, this diversity of colouring is not, perhaps, very striking; but in Southern climes, and especially in inland regions, where the air is less humid, the effect is far greater: the whole vault of heaven seems set with sparkling gems. The difference of tint we have mentioned, is perceptible to the naked eye, in our clime, only among stars of the first and second magnitudes. Even among these observers differ slightly; the colours, however, of the following bright stars are unmistakable:—Aldebaran, Arcturus, Betelgueux, and Pollux, are red; Sirius, Arided, and Regulus, are white; Capella, Procyon, and Dubhe, are yellow. Altair, Vega, Spica, and Castor, are generally described as white. The first two are not very distant from each other, and can be readily compared. Vega, passing near the zenith early in the afternoon at this season of the year, will be recognized by its brilliancy and the two companion stars to the south, a little westerly. In the same direction from Vega, lies Altair, the central and brightest star of three near together. It will be found that Altair and Vega present a decided contrast. The former exhibits a yellowish tinge, while Vega shines with a bluish white colour, which may be aptly compared to the gleam of polished steel. The beautiful star, Spica, is of the same colour as Vega; perhaps the blue tinge is slightly more decided in Spica. Castor, the western star of the twin stars Castor and Pollux, will be found in the evening in the east. It has a slightly green tinge when seen by the naked

eye, or in a telescope of moderate power. A telescope of higher power resolves it into two stars, one white, the other pale green.

The ancients noted some of these brighter stars, and we thus learn the remarkable fact that *their colours are not unchangeable*. Sirius was celebrated in the writings of the ancients as a bright red star; it is now decidedly white. Other changes have been noted, and some of these have occurred within a comparatively short time. Startling thoughts are suggested by these variations: we seem urged to the conclusion that some vast change has taken place in the very constitution of these orbs; and thence might gather that it is within the bounds of possibility that, at some future period, the light dispensed by our own sun should be similarly modified! We shall presently notice a theory, or rather a speculation, that has been started on this subject. Before doing so, however, we must describe the singular and beautiful phenomena revealed by the telescope.

Among the stars either altogether unseen, or but faintly visible, to the naked eye, the telescope reveals the same diversity of colouring. Many of these stars, indeed, are found to be coloured in a more marked manner than those we have hitherto mentioned. Stars are found shining with a scarlet, blood-red, brilliant orange, or deep yellow colour. Still, however, no stars of a deep blue or green tint occur singly. Thus far, then, the telescope has merely extended the range of our view, without disclosing appearances differing in any important respect from those already observed. When, however, a telescope of sufficient power is directed successively to double or multiple stars, we soon notice new and singular phenomena. Not only do we find every shade and tint of the primary and secondary colours, and such hues as grey, fawn, and ash-colour, but we notice that in many cases the stars forming a binary system are of complementary colours. Struve has observed that this is the case in upwards of one hundred of the double systems. In triple and multiple systems, similar arrangements of colour are noticed.

We append a list of some of the most remarkable and beautiful binary stars within the reach of telescopes of moderate power. The number following the name of each star expresses its magnitude. For the convenience of those of our readers who may desire to view these objects, and who possess charts of the heavens, or celestial globes, we give the position of each star, on the figure representing the constellation to which it belongs.

♄ Cancri (5), in the northern claw. Orange and purple.

♂ Herculis (4), on the eastern arm, near the body. Light green and red.

24 Comæ Berenicens (6), near the northern wing of Virgo. Orange and green.

61 Cygni (6), near the southern foot. Both yellow.

8 Monocerotis (4), on the nostril. Gold and lilac.

♋ Bootis (6), on the northern hand. White and blue.



ζ Ursæ Minoris (3), in the Bear's tail. White and light green. Distance 14". If this star (Mizar) be observed with the naked eye on a clear night, a faint companion (Alcor) will be observed close beside it. The distance between Mizar and Alcor is no less than 720", yet from observations of their proper motions, which are found to be identical, astronomers conclude that they form one system; a triple one, since Mizar is a double star. On the other hand, a fourth star, nearer to Mizar than Alcor is, is found to have a different proper motion, whence we may conclude that its association with Mizar and Alcor is not physical, but merely optical.

β Scorpii (2), a bright star in the Scorpion's head. White and lilac.

β Cygni, Albireo (3), on the beak. Yellow and blue.

η Cassiopeiæ (4), on the waist. White and purple.

γ Delphini (4), near the eye. Yellow and green.

γ Arietis, Mesartim (4), at the tip of the western horn; the first double star detected by the telescope. White and grey.

ε<sup>4</sup> and ε<sup>5</sup> Lyræ (5), a quadruple star, on the stand of the Lyre. A very low power resolves the star into a double one, the distance between the constituents being no less than 210". Each of these, when closely observed with higher powers, is found to be a double star. The distance between the first pair is 3.2"; the colours are white and pale red. The distance between the second pair is 2.6"; both are white.

It has been suggested that the diversity of colouring of which we have given these illustrations may be merely the effect of contrast. It is well known that in the neighbourhood of any brightly coloured object, other objects, less bright, appear tinged with the opposite, or complementary colour. Thus, if the scarlet curtains of a window, through which the light of the sun is pouring, be drawn close, objects in the room, not actually under the glare of the red light thus produced, appear green; even the blaze of a bright fire assuming that colour. Where one star is large and of a decided colour, the other small and of the true complementary colour, this explanation is not only plausible, but probable. But the reader cannot have failed to notice in the above list of double stars, many cases in which the colours of both constituents are decided, yet not complementary. In some instances both stars are of the same colour, or very nearly so. Here, then, the suggested explanation altogether fails. Again, we may subject this solution of the difficulty to the test of experiment. Where the components of a binary system are not too close, we may hide one, and allow the other to be seen. Thus, the effect of contrast being removed, we should expect the colouring of the visible constituent to disappear. In some cases, indeed, a decided modification is thus produced in the apparent colouring of the smaller component of a double system. More frequently, however, the colours remain as distinct, when the stars are viewed separately, as when both are in the field of view. Struve notes this specially in the case of the three stars composing ε<sup>2</sup> Cygni, the

largest of which is orange, the two smallest being blue. Nichol observes the same phenomenon in the fine double star Albireo ( $\beta$  Cygni). He remarks that, independently of the crucial test applied, "he cannot see those stars blazing, one with its yellow, the other with its blue light, and accept the optical hypothesis for one moment."

Thus far, then, we seem driven to the conclusion, that the colours observed in binary, triple, or multiple systems of stars, are inherent in the separate members of those systems; that either they differ in their original constitution, or have arrived at different stages of modification and development. We can have little doubt that these systems, and the stars generally, are engirdled about by planets, which, in their turn, are the abodes of living creatures. Without entering here, at any length, on the vexed question of the plurality of worlds, it may, we think, be safely said, that no trick of logic will convince the reflective mind that the myriads of bright orbs visible to the eye, or revealed by the telescope, or the myriads on myriads that no eye of man has seen, or shall ever see, speed in their orbits through a gigantic solitude—that from no spot in the illimitable universe but the speck that we inhabit arises the voice of adoration or of prayer. Imagine then, if possible, the effect of the diversity of colouring we have described, on the inhabitants of the planetary members attending on these systems. Or rather, agree with the younger Herschel, that "it may be easier suggested in words than conceived in imagination, what a variety of illumination two stars—a red and a green, or a yellow and blue one—must afford a planet circulating around either; and what cheering contrasts and grateful vicissitudes (a red and a green day, for instance, alternating with a white one, or with darkness) must arise from the presence or absence of one or other, or both, from the horizon." What should be the nature of beings inhabiting such planets, what the material constitution or products of those planets themselves, it were beyond the faculties given to man to imagine. It is sufficient that we know that their Almighty Creator has, with infinite wisdom and mercy, adjusted their nature and their powers to the situation in which He has placed them.

We shall now call the attention of the reader to a series of speculations offering a different explanation of the diversity of colouring among the stars. If these theories should be confirmed by observation and experiment, we need no longer resort to the idea that there is any material difference either in the original constitution, or present stage of development of these orbs. We shall require to make some preliminary remarks by way of illustration.

First, let the reader imagine himself on the bank of a canal, observing a series of waves, uniformly propagated along the stream. If he wishes to determine the *height* of these waves, he will have to remain satisfied with a rough approximation only. Many methods will readily suggest themselves, but none on whose exact accuracy he can depend. It might seem that it would be equally difficult to determine exactly the *breadth* of the waves, that is, the distance between successive crests. A very

simple method, however, will suffice to determine this feature of the waves, with any required degree of accuracy. Let the observer, fixing his eye on a certain wave, walk any measured distance (say 100 yards) at the same rate as the wave is moving. Suppose he accomplishes this distance in 65 seconds. He knows, then, that the velocity of transmission of the waves is 100 yards in 65 seconds. Let him now, standing still for 65 seconds, count the number of crests that pass him in that time. Suppose 360 pass him. Then, from his first observation, he knows that the first which passed him has travelled 100 yards from him. Within that distance all the 360 waves are uniformly distributed. Thus the breadth of each is  $\frac{1}{360}$ th part of 100 yards, or ten inches. This result is perfectly reliable, if, during his second observation, his position on the bank has been unchanged. But let us imagine that he has made this observation from a truck—on rails by the canal's edge—and that, unnoticed by him, the truck has glided uniformly along the rails. First, suppose that this motion has taken place in a direction contrary to that of the waves, and that while he is counting the passing crests the truck glides a distance of 20 yards. It is evident that when the last wave passes him, the first is 120 yards, instead of 100, from him. Thus the 360 waves are distributed over 120 yards, and the true breadth of each is  $\frac{1}{360}$ th part of 120 yards, or twelve inches. If, on the other hand, the truck had moved over 20 yards, in the same direction as the waves, it is equally obvious that the 360 waves are distributed over only 80 yards, and the true breadth of each is therefore  $\frac{1}{360}$ th part of 80 yards, or only eight inches. Similarly, at whatever rate the truck moves, it is evident the observer can no longer depend on the result of his observations. If it moves in a direction opposite to that in which the waves travel, they appear narrower, if it moves with them they appear broader, than they really are. Indeed, it is not difficult to conceive the truck to move in the same direction, and at the same rate, as the waves travel, in which case (if we could suppose the observer to remain unconscious of that motion) all undulation would appear to him to have ceased, and the water to have a waved but unmoving surface.

Let us now raise our thoughts to the aerial waves producing sound. Corresponding to the *height* of the waves before considered, we must now speak of the *magnitude* of the waves, that is, the amplitude of the vibrations producing them. This determines the loudness of the sound, and, *vice versâ*, the loudness of different sounds enables us to form some idea of the relative amplitudes of the vibrations producing them. We might still speak of the *breadth* of the waves, or the distance between successive points of equal concentration; we shall, however, speak of this distance as the *length* of the waves, that being the more usual mode of expression. This feature determines the *note* of a sound, and from the note we may, in turn, determine the length of the waves producing it. But let us consider if this determination is, in every case, to be depended on. If the observer and the source of sound are both at rest, or both

moving in the same direction with equal velocities, there is no reason for doubting the correctness of this criterion. But if either the observer or the source of sound is moving, or if both are in motion, in different directions, may we not imagine that in this case, as in the former, the length of the waves will no longer be correctly determined from the note, unless the observer takes such motion, or motions, into account? We should expect that the waves would appear shorter, that is, the note of the sound higher, if the observer's distance from the source of sound is diminishing, and *vice versâ*. To produce an appreciable effect, the relative velocity of the observer and the source of sound must bear an appreciable relation to the velocity of sound, or more than 740 miles an hour. A velocity sufficiently great for this purpose may readily be obtained on a railway. A velocity of thirty-seven miles an hour, or  $\frac{1}{10}$ th of the velocity of sound, would sensibly affect the note of any sound, supposing our theory to be correct. On this point we are no longer left in doubt. The results of experiments tried on the railway uniting Utrecht and Maarsen have been found to correspond exactly with predictions framed on the hypothesis we have stated. These experiments are thus described by the late Professor Nichol:—"At intervals of something upwards of a thousand yards were placed three groups of musicians, who remained motionless during the requisite period. Another musician on the railway sounded, at intervals, one uniform note; and its effects on the ears of the stationary musicians have been fully published. From these certainly—from the recorded changes between *grave* and the more *acute*, and *vice versâ*, confirming even *numerically* what the relative velocities might have enabled one to predict,—it appears justifiable to conclude that the general theory is correct, and that the note of any sound may be greatly modified, if not wholly changed, by the velocity of the individual hearing it,"—or (it should have been added) of the source of sound itself.

We shall now present the theory of M. Doppler on the colours of the double stars. The illustrations we have given will enable the reader to anticipate its nature. Light also is propagated by undulations, which are conceived to take place in an ethereal medium of nearly infinite elasticity and impalpability, occupying all space, and the pores of solid bodies. But the undulations of which we have now to speak travel with a velocity that the human mind is utterly unable to follow; they are also of inconceivable minuteness. They are produced by vibrations whose nature is far from simple; speaking generally, however, we may say that their *amplitude* determines the *intensity* of the light produced, while the *length* of the waves formed by them determines the *colour* of the light. In general, waves of different lengths are commingled, but from the colour of the light, we can determine the *average* length of the waves producing it. Now, guided by the two illustrations we have given, the reader will easily see that this determination is to be depended upon as accurate, unless the observer and the source of light are approaching, or separating,

with a velocity bearing an appreciable relation to the velocity of light. This velocity, it is well known, is no less than 191,500 miles in each second of time. Every species of motion with which we are familiar seems absolute rest when compared with this inconceivable velocity. But there are motions among the stars—orbital motions in double, triple, and multiple systems, and proper motions of these systems, and of single stars—whose velocities bear some proportion even to the immense velocity of light. Our own sun, with his attendant planets, is travelling through space with a comparatively slow movement, his velocity having been calculated at about 150,000,000 miles in a year. But we cannot doubt that the proper motions of many stars, and systems of stars, are far greater than this. We would more particularly, however, call attention to the orbital motions in double systems of stars. In some of these, in which the eccentricity of the orbits is great, each member sweeps with amazing velocity over that portion of its orbit nearest to the position of closest approach or periaster. And in many cases, owing to the immensity of the orbits described, this velocity is maintained, with little change, for many years. Now, neglecting for a moment all consideration of the proper motion common to each member of the system, let us consider the effects of the orbital motions of the two stars. Where the plane in which these movements take place is perpendicular to the line of sight of the observer on earth, it is obvious they can produce no appreciable change in the distance of either star from him. When, however, this plane is coincident with, or inclined at a small angle to, the line of sight, then, throughout the greater portion of their paths, the stars are rapidly changing their distances from the observer, one moving from, the other towards him, or *vice versâ*. Where one is much smaller than the other, its velocity will be proportionately greater. In triple and multiple systems similar movements will take place, not only in double members of such systems, but whenever such a system, or a part of one, is divided into two clusters, each revolving in an orbit of considerable eccentricity about the other.

M. Doppler urges that the considerations we have detailed are sufficient to account for the colours of the stars generally, but especially for the colours seen so conspicuously in double, triple, and multiple systems. He supposes that all the stars are white, or nearly so; that, in fact, they differ little from our sun in their original constitution and present stage of development. Where a star appears to be coloured violet, indigo, blue, or green, he conceives that, owing to its orbital motion, its proper motion, the motion of the solar system in space, or these combined, it is approaching us, with more or less velocity, according to its apparent colour. If this colour is violet, the velocity of its approach is greatest; if the apparent colour is green, this velocity is least. On the other hand, when a star appears to be coloured red, orange, or yellow, he conceives that, from similar causes, it is moving with more or less velocity from us,—a star that appears red having the greatest velocity from us, one that appears yellow the least. On

this supposition, we could readily understand why the members of double systems would exhibit a greater variety of colours than the single stars. The latter would owe their apparent colours to their proper motions only, the former to the combination, in different ways, of their proper motions with their orbital movements. The complementary colours of so many double stars would also be easily accounted for. These colours would simply imply, according to M. Doppler's theory, that the two members of such a system were moving in opposite directions, with respect to the observer on earth. But we have already shown that, in many cases, this must necessarily happen. The theory offers no explanation of the absence of colours from the blue end of the spectrum, in single stars, and the prevalence (on the whole) even among double and multiple stars, of colours denoting separation, over those denoting approach; unless we are to suppose an expansion, or, as it were, an unwinding of our galaxy, to be taking place, at so vast a rate as to produce a velocity of separation (on the whole) among its members equivalent to the observed prevalence of colours from the red end of the spectrum. It may be suggested as a possible explanation, that light from the blue end of the spectrum suffers more by extinction or absorption, in traversing our atmosphere, and (probably) the ether occupying space, than light from the red end of the spectrum. The reader is, doubtless, already familiar with this property as the received explanation of the blue colour of the sky, and of the beautiful hues of twilight.

We need hardly point out to the reader the importance, even the magnificence, of the speculations we have just described; nor need we, on the other hand, remind him that they are, as yet, only speculations. If they should be confirmed by observation and experiment—a work which must, necessarily, be one of time—they will not merely explain a difficulty, and remove an apparent anomaly, but they will become of incalculable service in future investigations. At present, astronomers are quite unable to determine the real direction of the motion of any star. It requires the utmost delicacy of modern instruments to detect and measure the apparent motion of a star on the celestial vault. But this is only a portion, in many cases but a small portion, of the star's real motion. The other portion—that is, its motion directly from, or towards, the observer—it is utterly hopeless for him to attempt to measure by the most delicate instrument. The nearest and brightest star presents no appreciable disc, in the most powerful telescope yet made; and supposing, even, that we could discern the disc of any star, yet any change in its magnitude, or the brilliancy of the star's light, must be so excessively minute, save possibly in one or two exceptional cases, that the most delicate instrument would fail to detect, and far more to measure it. But, if M. Doppler's theory were established, we should at once obtain a measure of this very motion, and one far more exact and trustworthy than any yet obtained of the transverse motion of the stars. Again, this theory if confirmed, would afford a more powerful



means than any we yet possess of confirming, or disproving, the supposed existence of vast opaque orbs, disturbing or modifying the motions of many of the fixed stars. In these, and many kindred subjects, of great interest to the inquiring mind, this theory would powerfully aid our investigations.

At present, we must be content to view M. Doppler's inquiries simply as we should any other speculations, not confirmed, hardly even suggested by observation and experiment. It will be established or confuted by the observations of the next few years. It must be reconciled with the observed colours and changes of colour of single stars, and more especially with the variations of motion, known to be taking place from year to year, within double and multiple systems. The investigations of star spectra, now occupying the attention of the Astronomer Royal, will doubtless reveal much as to the constitution of these orbs. How far the observed colours, or absence of colours, in nebulae, can be applied to the investigation, it is, as yet, useless to inquire, since we know absolutely nothing, at present, of the constitutions, distances, or motions of these mysterious members of the universe.

We shall conclude with a quotation which appears to us to confirm to some extent the views of M. Doppler. In the accounts handed down to us of the celebrated new star that was seen in the year 1572, the following words are used in describing its gradual disappearance, during which, we may reasonably suppose, it was moving away from the earth, with a great and constantly increasing velocity :—" As it decreased in size, *so it varied in colour* ; at first its light was white and extremely bright ; *it then became yellowish, afterwards of a ruddy colour, like Mars, and finished with a pale livid colour.*"

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## Cousin Phillis.

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### PART II.

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy cat sleeping on the hearth-rug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By-and-by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source, slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sate by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was *L'Inferno*. Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to "infernal," she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

"Oh! it is so difficult! Can you help me?" putting her finger below a line.

"Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!"

"Don't you see it is Dante?" she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

"Italian, then?" said I, dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

"Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time."



COUSIN PHILLIS AND HER BOOK

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"You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now."

"Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much! Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it."

"I wish I did," said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. "If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe."

"Who is Mr. Holdsworth?" said Phillis, looking up.

"Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything;" my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

"How is it that he speaks Italian?" asked Phillis.

"He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in."

"Oh, dear!" said Phillis; "I wish——" and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

"Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties?"

She was silent for a minute or two, and then she made reply—

"No! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths."

"But I may stay and help you, mayn't I?"

"Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me."

I was both flattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory

work it had proved to him, it seemed from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

"I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women."

"Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?" asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

"No!" said he, shaking his head. "I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things."

"But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children?"

"It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could hear the message I bear to them best in their smart clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress!"

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice,—

"But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters."

"It's but natural, minister!" said his wife; "I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one, myself!"

"The love of dress is a temptation and a snare," said he, gravely. "The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife," said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, "in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own?"

"Sleep in the grey room?—change our room at this time o' day?" cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

"Yes," said he. "It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin!" he continued; "I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard."

"He's a downright lazy tyke!" said cousin Holman. "He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly."

"True," said the minister. "But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children."

"More shame for him!"

"But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes



sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife and children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room."

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all "exercised in spirit," as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent friend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousin's life there—liked it, I mean,

as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me; I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as "Manning's driving wheel." Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men. Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands, blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back,

listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now and then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look at the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snow-storm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much attention as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down "straight back," "small muzzle," "deep barrel," and I know not what else, under the head "cow." He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman,—

"Whatever is the man about!"

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hardwood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick; the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had

once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

"Paul," he began, "I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine (calling it by its technical name), "and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner."

"Mr. Ellison the Justice!—who lives in King Street? why, he drives his carriage!" said I, doubting, yet exultant.

"Ay, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, any how. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lasses are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother; and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune if all goes well."

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at

some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said,—

"Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for——"

"My mother?" asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

"No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father."

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

"Father," said I, "if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother."

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

"You see she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek."

"She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children," was my father's comment on this.

"But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned; she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband."

"It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband," replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. "It's a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy."

"I don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father," said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

"Well," said he, after a pause. "It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar,—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfor-

tune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound,—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth——”

“Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?” asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tête-à-tête*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

“I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him——”

“I wish I'd as good,” said Mr. Holdsworth. “But has the business a ‘pretty mouth?’”

“You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,” said my father. “I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.”

“Phillis Holman!” said Mr. Holdsworth. “Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.”

“There is nothing to know,” said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. “There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.”

“And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.”

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—con-  
descending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach,—



"Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was!"

"I don't know that I found out, sir," said I. "But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father."

"No! most likely not, old fellow," replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome pleasant clear face his was; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares,—

"Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you."

"Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff."

"But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin," said I.

"That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance."

"I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm," said I, eagerly. "In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times; only I thought you would find it dull."

"Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the ——— Company want me to go to the ——— Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking."

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the line, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into ——— Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many

weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him "masculine news," as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state, and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

"Bring him out here," said the minister. "Our air here is good to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic."

"And," said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, "tell him there is new milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cow's cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in."

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

"For you must go with me, Manning," said he; "I used to be as

impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers, and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy."

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him, and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

"Manning," said he, "I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man."

"No," I replied, boldly. "I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness."

"And you've found out already that there is a greater chance of disagreement between two 'kinds of goodness,' each having its own idea of right, than between a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right?"

"I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that is bad for you."

"When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics.' You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning?"

"No, I don't," said I. "But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning."

"Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like," he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness of strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

"I don't know where they can be," said I. "But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired."

"Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do?"

"Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are."

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

"Eh, dear!" said she, "the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time."

"Did not they expect us to dinner?" said I.

"Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough."

"And is Phillis gone, too?" Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

"No! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas."

"Let us go there," said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel walks; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish-pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

"This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis," said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

"Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would."

"It was my fault," said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as

well as if she had put it more fully into words. "I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind."

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

"Have you finished getting peas?" taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; "or may we stay and help you?"

"If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?" added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

"Not a bit," said he. "It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?"

"Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are."

"I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fulness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work."

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

"I am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself."

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

"It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know—I thought, perhaps, you really liked it. I ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been ill!" And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray, wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago) and then quietly withdrew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if

he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open casements of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

"Don't you think him handsome?" asked I.

"Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him," she replied. "But is not he very like a foreigner?"

"Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion," said I.

"I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman."

"I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England."

"Not if he began it in Italy, because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently."

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

"When is your mother coming home?"

"I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul? He may be faint again."

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

"So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still? It did not look like it a minute ago."

"Phillis and I understand each other," I replied, sturdily. "We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband, if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes" (somehow I did not like to say "as a wife"), "but we love each other dearly."

"Well? I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman."

Woman! beautiful woman! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air, out of Rover's reach, who was



giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a "Down, Rover! do hush!" she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

"I should like to have sketched her," said Mr. Holdsworth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

"I would give a good deal for a book," said he. "It would keep me quiet." He began to look round; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

"Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*," said he, reading their titles aloud. "*Housewife's complete Manual*; *Berridge on Prayer*; *L'Inferno*—Dante!" in great surprise. "Why, who reads this?"

"I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember? She knows Latin and Greek, too."

"To be sure! I remember! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, 'Cousin Phillis!' What's here: a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Barette won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble."

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty: it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, and replaced the paper in the book, and put the latter back in its place, when I heard the sound of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgment, and then coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

"Oh, Paul!" said she, "I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour, he would—— But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come!"

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

"I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something

to eat and drink, I wonder? there's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness." And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class. I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a certain list of books, his theodolite and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned, sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

"Yes!" said he. "I am fidgeting fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me."

"You have enjoyed yourself, then?"

"Oh! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life! and yet removed from the dulness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him 'the minister,' like every one else."

"You get on with him, then?" said I. "I was a little afraid."

"I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others."

"Then you are quite friends now?" I asked.

"Yes, thoroughly; at any rate as far as I go. I never met with a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen—— Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for?"

"Yes! I thought it did not promise much rest."

"Oh! some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphuisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)"

"I thought the Italian books were for her."

"Yes! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner; and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers."

"Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words?"

"Oh! yes"—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

"But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read?"

"Pooh! What can be more harmless? Why make a bugbear of a word? It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take *Virgil* for gospel?"

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

"Ah!" said cousin Holman, "you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this! I can see how busy you'll make yourself! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on."

"Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here?" he answered, warmly. "I am only afraid you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands."

"That's right," she replied. "Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house."

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

"Yes! I like him!" said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. "I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgment."

"He is a good fellow; indeed he is," said I. "My father thinks well of him; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him."

"Yes," (once more hesitating,) "I like him, and I think he is an upright man; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says—— But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day."

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Ay, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

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# Attempts at Classic Metres in Quantity.

By ALFRED TENNYSON.

## TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

### *Hexameters and Pentameters.*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!

No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.

When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?

Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,

Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters!

## MILTON.

### *Alcaics.*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,

O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,

God-gifted organ-voice of England,

Milton, a name to resound for ages;

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,

Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,

Tower, as the deep-domed empyræan

Rings to the roar of an angel onset—

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,

The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,

And bloom profuse and cedar arches

Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,

Where some refulgent sunset of India

Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,

And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods

Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Hendecasyllabics.*

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,  
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,  
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me  
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—  
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—  
 As some exquisite rose, a piece of inmost  
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

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Some, and among these one at least of our best and greatest, have endeavoured to give us the *Iliad* in English hexameters, and by what appears to me their failure, have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our blank verse in this matter, and now after having spoken so disrespectfully here of these hexameters, I venture, or rather feel bound, to subjoin a specimen, however brief and with whatever demerits, of a blank-verse translation.

He ceased, and sea-like roar'd the Trojan host,  
 And loosed their sweating horses from the yoke,  
 And each beside his chariot bound his own;  
 And oxen from the city and goodly sheep



In haste they drove, and honey-hearted\* wine  
 And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd  
 Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain  
 Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.  
 And these all night sat on the bridge of war  
 Triumphant; many a fire before them blazed:  
 As when in heaven the stars about the moon  
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,  
 And every height comes out, and jutting peak  
 And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
 Break open to their highest, and all the stars  
 Shine, and the hind rejoices in his heart:  
 So many a fire between the ships and stream  
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,  
 A thousand on the plain; and close by each  
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;  
 And champing golden grain their horses stood,  
 † Hard by the chariots, waiting for the dawn.

*Iliad* 8. 542-561.

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\* Or, "wine sweet to the mind," but I use this epithet simply as a synonym of "sweet."

† Or, if something like the spondaic close of the line be required,

"And waited—by their chariots—the fair dawn."

Or more literally,

"And, champing the white barley and spelt, their steeds  
 Stood by the cars, waiting the throned morn."

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## Life in a Country House.

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DISPENSING and receiving hospitality in the country to the extent to which it is now carried may be classed among the institutions which have grown out of railway travelling. Distance is, now-a-days, the one thing never dreamt of as an excuse either for not inviting or for declining. In posting-days the custom used to be confined to neighbours, or if great friends came several scores of dreary miles, they were expected to remain, not days but weeks; and ladies were only just recovering from the fatigues of the journey by the time most visits of the present date are over.

From the eve of the 12th of August in the North, and of the 1st of September everywhere else, hundreds of country houses assemble frequent parties, many of which are scarcely without visitors till the beginning of the following London season. The custom is mainly confined to the British Isles; for, though it is highly appreciated by the French, Belgians, and others, the law relative to division of property will always so dwarf the majority of fortunes as to prevent it from ever figuring conspicuously as part of their social system; and the amount of wealth and prosperity which it indicates amongst us must be enormous, looking at the style in which things are done. No house where entertainment is the order of the autumn and winter months can be kept going with a less income than 10,000*l.* a year. The different degrees to which things are well or ill done depends chiefly upon whether the host or hostess (whichever happens to reign) is "understanding" and zealous, or the reverse. The scale aimed at varies but little anywhere. Smaller fortunes of, say, 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* a year, simply entertain fewer people, and less often; but everybody gives the same number of dishes for dinner, and champagne each day; everywhere there are carriages to drive people out, keepers in readiness, &c. &c. There are, it is true, exceptional cases, but they are rare. At W——, a bachelor, on going to dress for dinner, beholds himself reflected on every side in vast sheets of looking-glass, by the light of no fewer than eighteen wax-candles, and at K—— each married couple has a private sitting-room, which is brilliantly illuminated both at the fall of day, and again when the party breaks up at night; editions of the principal newspapers are provided for their special use, and even postage envelopes are not forgotten; but what can astonish at a place where thirteen days' first-rate cover-shooting can be had without going over an inch of ground twice?

But everywhere the main point of all is the cook, since the spirits of the guests, consequently the conversation, consequently the whole success of the party, depends thereupon. "*Le véritable Amphitriton c'est l'Amphi-*

*trion où l'on dîne*," which, freely translated, means that no man deserves the name of a *host* who gives you what does not deserve the name of a *dinner*. A few romantic and *very* young people begin life with an Utopian idea that food, except in as much as regards health, is a subject quite unworthy the attention of intellectual being; in fact, that gastronomy is a degrading study. "The more the brute is snubbed," say they, "the more does the mind improve and develop; and since, do what one will, far too much of the brute remains after all, how culpable must it be wantonly to aggravate matters by pandering to a sensual and corrupt appetite?" All I can say to these young stoics is, that however well such systems may work in convents and monasteries, they are utterly inapplicable to society; for experience shows that the surest way of getting people to give *you* an intellectual treat is to give *them* a substantial and savoury one; and it is on this account that each new gastronomic discovery deserves to be hailed as a step in the march of civilization. Give people a bad dinner and they become utterly worthless; give them a good one, and they will sing, play, act charades, talk, and, above all, laugh, to any desired amount.

Railways! I thank you! I have known all the social joys of a winter in Rome, a winter in Paris, and of several London seasons, and have arrived at the conclusion that for real enjoyment of society, there is nothing like a country house. There, no tearing about from street to street, no incessant answering of notes, no endless appointments to distract the brain and ruffle the temper; but each pleasure *comes to you* in an agreeable and a peaceful routine, which is still full of variety. The more people visit, the more do they become fitted for visiting, and, accordingly, the more they enjoy it. After the first two months the novice sighs for anchorage; but drive him on a few weeks longer, and flitting from house to house becomes a second nature, and by no means an idle or unprofitable existence need it be. For example, a lady may visit nearly the whole year round, and yet frequently contrive to publish books, to keep up her music and a large correspondence, to embroider yards upon yards of tapestry, and all without the smallest sacrifice of what is due to social obligations. Such instances are known. Music, drawing, needlework, reading the papers, and even letter-writing may, to a great extent, be carried on in public.

Unless all attend a meet of hounds, or some distant expedition is decided upon, you are pretty well master of your time, with the exception of breakfast, until twelve, when it will be well to join whatever the chase or the gun may have left of the party. After lunch, everybody is expected to hold themselves at the disposal of the lady of the house, for a ride, drive, or walk, as the case may be. If the weather be such as to induce you to remain within doors, your co-operation will be sought for a game at pool, badminton (which is battledore and shuttlecock played with sides, across a string suspended some five feet from the ground), and similar amusements. At four you may again retire, if you please, until dinner-

time. A thorough wet or snow-stormy day, when the bleakness without enhances the comfort within, often turns out to be anything but a bore, from the effect it has of keeping every one sociably in the house, and driving them to endless expedients and devices, which, although originally adopted to kill time, often end in entertaining it. When a riding-school and numerous stud are at hand, a scratch pack of musicians and riding-habits of various pretensions make their appearance, and equestrian quadrilles and lancers are gone through ; or a bar is put up, and "larked" over, as the case may be. What constitutes the great charm of this sort of life is the ever-increasing fashion of letting people do, with respect to amusing themselves, exactly as they please. Everything at the command of the host is put at the disposal of the guest, but care is taken that he shall understand he is nowise expected to take part in anything, unless perfectly agreeable to himself. "Liberty Hall" is the title almost every host wishes to gain for his house. Punctuality is of course expected at dinner, though not always at breakfast, and no one need appear at lunch unless he please.

Our young men have long since grown very impatient of being kept long in the dining-room after the fair objects of their aspirations have left ; more particularly if they are not sufficiently intimate to seek consolation by confiding to each other their woes ; and it is sometimes highly diverting to note the various phases of their wretchedness, while foxes and hunters, after driving away church-rates and the bench of magistrates, succumb in their turn before pheasants' eggs and the game-laws, at the venerable end of the table. Fitz-Romeo seems trying to mesmerise by his vacant stare the topmost plum of the pyramid before him, young Love-and-Starve is lost in admiration for a flaw in the ceiling, while poor Fargone seeks diligently for a knot in the table-cloth with his right-hand, while apparently endeavouring to pull off the left half of his moustache with the other.

In theory, most men agree that fifteen or twenty minutes is ample time to sit over their wine, but alas ! the theoretical twenty too often grows to a practical fifty even now-a-days, while people still living remember a time when there was no such thing as driving home after dinner, an invitation to dine being always accompanied by one to pass the night : for the potent reason that the gentlemen of the party were never expected to rejoin the ladies after the repast, but to be assisted to their rooms in various stages of oblivious happiness, far on in the small hours.

Several efforts have been made to introduce the foreign custom of the gentlemen leaving the room with the ladies, but happily without success, as there can be no doubt that both meet again with renewed pleasure after a few minutes' separation. The late Lord A., dining with Lord and Lady S. (who were about the first to make the innovation), happened to be tormented by a tight boot, and, being ignorant of the intended measure, he contrived by the aid of his other foot, and a friendly leg of the table, to draw it off. "I shall have an opportunity," thought he, "of re-booting

after the ladies retire;" and his face beamed as he congratulated himself on his release, and on the impossibility of detection. Poor man, he was noted for getting into absurd situations! The gloves are adjusted, the signal is given (that signal which is perhaps the only one never yet met but with acquiescence), and my lord rises in his place with serene brow, but, O horror! he presently beholds the being, late his lovely charge, looking at him in a very ominous manner! A glance round the room, and the whole terrible truth flashes upon him like a thunderbolt. There is no help for it—go he must. The drawing-room is reached, unconscious beauty seats herself on an ottoman in the most conspicuous part of the room, and talks on and on without giving any signs of coming to a full stop. The wretched little peer stands fidgeting before her, and planning a speedy exit: when, just as he believes himself on the verge of accomplishing it, and is flattering himself that his black stocking has saved him from discovery, the door is flung wide open, and in comes John Thomas bearing "my lord's boot" upon a silver charger!

I have heard it argued that another foreign custom, the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, ought to be adopted in England in lieu of our present breakfast and lunch, on the ground that two regular meals a day, when the party is large, are as much as servants have properly time for; but this plan would never suit our sportsmen, and I trust the ladies would not be willing to forego their society up to dinner-time; besides, this system would necessitate so much carrying of tea, toast, &c. to the bedrooms, that it is doubtful whether much trouble would be saved by the change.

The non-sporting men of the party, if they remain entertaining (?) the ladies all day, will generally find themselves at a discount when the Nimrods return; the ungrateful fair having a surprising appetite for variety. Where shooting or hunting is to be had, those who partake in the sport are proverbially happier on a visit than their wives and daughters, and this is, in great measure, owing to a habit the latter have of all sitting too much together instead of seeking occupation in their respective rooms; for a due balance of solitude and society is nowhere more necessary to be observed than at these rural gatherings.

The country house is in itself a little world complete. There all the latest improvements of civilization are crowded together, in art, equipage, dress, gardening, cookery, and upholstery. We have in the host and his family a petty monarch, and the princes and princesses of the blood; the aristocracy is represented by the guests; valets and ladies'-maids may do duty for lords and ladies in waiting; while the tenantry around require no twisting to represent the ratepayers.

The writer of this paper was not long since confined to his room for some days by illness, at a certain popular house in the South. His windows looked out upon the vast stable-yard. It must strike foreigners that no man of us ever builds a comfortable house for himself, but he invariably follows up with a palace for his horses. It was an exhilarating

sight to the eye of a sick man to see the five bays, in their shining harness, stamping with impatience, until the dandy postilions and outriders presently came forth, looking as if they had never done an hour's work in their lives, "and didn't intend to;" but were only going to condescend to ride, just to show how well they could do it. A few hours and they return mud-bespattered, and "all of a smoke," presently followed by other carriages that have set down new guests, and have come round to be unladen of their luggage. Lights appear in many windows, shadows flit busily by, and there is a pleasing sense of refreshment for the road-weary, and of preparation for regaling lord and valet, man and beast. O bachelors of London, sick abed! it is better to lie thus, though tantalized by not-to-be-responded-to dinner-bells, and kept awake by festive sounds, than to suffer in the undisturbed silence of your laundress's list shoe!

Owners of fine places generally appear to see as much company at home, and to go out as little themselves as they can possibly manage; and the difficulty of getting together a score of visitors, particularly at rather short notice, is often surprising; indeed, it is by no means uncommon to find that the number of *invités*, as compared with those who come, is in the ratio of four or even five to one. The grand difficulty is to get men; for what with the rich ones, whose business or pleasure keeps them at home, and what with the poor ones tied down by their various professions, the class of visiting men is chiefly confined to the few *petits rentiers* of society, the most desirable of whom are generally full of similar engagements.

*La crème de la crème*, when visiting in the country, is constantly being thrown with people who may be designated as only "single cream," and whom it would otherwise meet but in London crowds, and probably never happen to become acquainted with. They are invited together for various reasons, such as neighbourhood, political interest, or being hard up for company. If the single cream be charming, it has now at least the chance of being appreciated by the double cream, a chance which it might never have been blessed with in town; and many a fast friendship between some favourite of fashion and one who, while of the same or even higher rank than herself, but not in the former's exclusive set, owes its origin to some such confusion in the social dairy. But mixing company, even to a slight degree, is a dangerous expedient for all save the very gods and goddesses of fashion, since, when minor deities attempt it, cliques and dissensions are almost sure to make their appearance, and spoil the whole *agrément* of the visit; except, indeed, so far as the laughing philosopher of the party is concerned. Members of any of the four great aristocracies—Beauty, Talent, Rank, and Money—are now universally welcome, provided always that they be fine specimens.

It is certain that one gets to know what people are far better in four days at a country house than in the hurry and crowd of as many London seasons; and it is an interesting employment to analyze the



composition of the *réunion*, to trace the amount of success attending it to the true cause, or to discover what it is that spoils the salad.

There is a gift, rare indeed to meet with, the possessor of which is apt to be little thought of by the many, and yet he is more valuable in a house than a host of otherwise accomplished and more strikingly gifted men. It is the knack, of which the owner is probably unconscious, of drawing out all the other guests, yet without seeming to do so; and of making them display their various endowments to the best advantage. This tact or knowledge of his species enables him to act like a magician even on a party of strangers, and his value is often discovered for the first time when his absence accidentally occurs. Society is, doubtless, as necessary to such a man as he is to society, yet being invariably one whose hours of retirement are amply employed, he never enters it without feeling that he is buying his enjoyment at the cost of precious time; and he is determined, if possible, to have a good return for the sacrifice. Perhaps, next to him in value, comes the man who takes the line of making himself to a certain premeditated degree a butt to the rest of the company. To do this without ever incurring their pity, which would be fatal, requires considerable sharpness. The third place may be assigned to the amusing "rattle," who is always ready to fill up any gap in the conversation.

Go where one will, and however charming the party in the house, the aborigines of the neighbourhood who come occasionally to dinner are, for the most part, *savage*, ill-dressed, and uninteresting. This applies especially to the female specimens of the class. Who is not familiar with the tall man, who, on being announced, advances up the room with a lady on each arm, one of whom wears spectacles, and is sinking into the seer and yellow, while the other is unbeautifully young? Why is the said young lady invariably robed in a nondescript white garment, with three-quarters of a yard of coloured ribbon round the place where the waist ought to be, the remaining quarter of the yard bought being split, hemmed on the frayed side, and made to do duty for ornament on the sleeves? The damsel's complexion and figure are easy of description. The former is pale wherever it should be pink, and pink wherever it should be pale; the latter is round wherever it should be flat, and flat wherever it should be round. The luckless cavalier who takes her in to dinner will find that the only result of his many efforts to get up a conversation will be that she repeats a great portion of each of his questions in her reply. "Do you often attend archery meetings, Miss Queer?" "No, I don't often attend archery meetings;" and so on. Probably, when they have departed, a discussion will arise among some of the party as to the relationship of the trio: whether the middle-aged woman was wife or sister to the tall man, and what the young one was to both?

Two of the most irritating faults a house can be marred by are children and dogs. I refer not to children who, produced for a moment in gorgeous array, and happily awed by the novelty of company, are in a

subdued state, which renders them rather desirable fancy articles than otherwise—to have their fat cheeks well pinched, a sugar-plum stuffed into their mouths, and away with them—but when they are for ever running in and out: when, alas, they have lost their shyness, they become almost pestiferous. Dogs, though far less objectionable, are also to be condemned, because fatally apt to monopolize conversation (strange charge against dumb animals though it be), to the detriment of more interesting subjects. When it has been my fate to undergo, for days together, a constant recurrence of dog-talk, how fervently have I wished some invisible shorthand-writer were employed taking down all that had been said about Flo and Tiny during the visit; that I might, at the end, display it in black and white, to the confusion, let us hope, of the guilty ones.

Surely the few houses still without a smoking-room will not long persevere in the singularity? To be driven *bon gré mal gré* to one's bedroom, when the ladies retire, is a species of tyranny bordering on the unbearable; while being consigned to the crickets, black-beetles, and roasting blaze of the kitchen, is only one degree less horrible. Another point: If the master of the house be no smoker, let him confide to a trustworthy guest the charge of seeing lights out and all made safe for the night; but let him not come yawning and fidgeting about until the rest throw away their half-consumed cigars in sheer despair. Such unwise measures often defeat their own end by tempting men to read in bed, to bring clandestine packs of cards in their portmanteaux, and to establish secret rubbers in their rooms.

The time-honoured custom of feeing servants and gamekeepers still remains a thorn in the side, even more of the entertainers than of the entertained; as regards servants, it has been greatly modified of late years. A single man, who takes his valet with him, has no fees to give in the house; though if he rides, or if a carriage be ordered out solely for his use, he will be expected to give a trifle in the stables. Housemaids look for a small gratuity from ladies only. A man, visiting without his valet, must of course fee the man who waits upon him; but the following very moderate scale of payment will always be found to satisfy, except perhaps from very great gentlemen indeed, viz., for one or two nights, half-a-crown; from three nights to a week, five shillings; from that to ten days, seven shillings and sixpence; and for a fortnight, half a sovereign. A sovereign will be ample even for six weeks. Reduced within these limits, whatever may be urged against the practice, it is shorn of half its evils, and there does not appear to be any means of abolishing it, though some years ago the noble owner of A—— adopted the railway-station plan, and had written up in various parts of the house, "You are requested to give no vales to the servants."

The chief use of taking about a servant of one's own is, that he packs and unpacks for one. It is a great comfort on arriving at a house, after a long journey, to be able to spend the interval before the dressing-bell in

chat or repose, and then to find everything laid out in one's room at the very same angles as at home; and there are few more pitiful cases than that of a young bachelor, whose head is full of other thoughts, having to devote the last hour or two of his time before leaving a house to the task of packing his own things, more particularly if he be in love, which ought always to be the case at the end of a visit; yet he can hardly allow a strange servant to do the work for him, for fear of finding his tooth-powder dispersed over his dress-coat on reaching his next destination, a not improbable contingency.

The waiting at table is most perfect at houses where none of the visitors' servants are admitted into the room, the home staff of officials being equal to all requirements. When the party is large, a proportion of one attendant to every three guests will be found sufficient.

It is much to be regretted, however, that keepers who are able to show a good head of game are becoming every year more exorbitant in their expectations. Add to this the bill habitually presented to each sportsman in Norfolk and Suffolk for shot, and at many places in the said counties for powder also, after killing, be it remembered, the host's game for him, which game is probably destined for market; add moreover the fees to loaders and beaters in cover-shooting, and it will readily be understood why many a young *fanatico* for the sport, whose means are weak as his frame is robust, is compelled to decline an invitation to good shooting quarters.

At a certain noble earl's, where nobody pays for ammunition, and everything is done *en prince*, I am told that you find on your dressing-table, before dinner, a list of what has fallen to your own gun, together with some blank labels on which you are free to write the addresses of any friends among whom you may wish to divide the whole amount you have killed.

Good reader, you surely did not expect to get through this paper without a little croquet? Where can one go now-a-days without stumbling upon that unamusing amusement?—literally *stumbling*, for one is sure to catch one's foot in those man-trappish hoops. A certain indignant friend of mine declares he would stick up a notice on his lawn (if he had one) to the effect that all persons found perpetrating croquet on the premises should be prosecuted, &c. Well, not even the seven men I supplanted in the affections of the seven Miss Roquets can accuse me of a partiality for the game: but still, intrinsically bad as croquet is as a game—grovelling on the ground as it is—are not its advantages even greater than its faults? Is it not, after all, an incentive to flirtation? And is not that, pray, a point second to none in the success of a country mustering? Whether happiness or heart-breaking be the ultimate consequence, of course nobody stops to inquire; the fun over, who cares for the victims? The very hostess who, on other occasions, inveighs most loudly against those despicable beings, incorrigible flirts, will be the first to engage “the wretches” whenever she contemplates filling her house; and, more—

over, if she knows what she is about, she will scatter over her rooms little tables with games on them that only two can play at; unless, indeed, she has marriageable daughters of her own, which would spoil the look of the measure.

Private theatricals, when carefully got up, are to be highly commended; though it has been known to happen that, of all engaged, the only person distinctly heard by the audience from beginning to end was the prompter. The contempt of actors for amateurs sometimes shows itself in an amusing way.

"I know what you amateurs are," said a professional to me once. "You all think more of your get-up than anything else. Ugh! Ridiculous! to see one great booby going up to another with: 'Oh! how nice you do look, to be sure! How do you think I look?'"

I could not help feeling the truth of the remark.

A permanent theatre certainly takes up a vast deal of room in a house, and temporary ones are seldom satisfactory. At S—— the theatre has a floor constructed with a view to dancing, and makes an admirable ball-room. When used for this purpose a *buffet*, behind which is a gay landscape scene, occupies the front of the stage. At an appointed hour this is dismantled and removed, the scene is drawn up, discovering a Gothic apartment, fitted up with armour, in which supper is tastefully laid out *à la* Lucrezia Borgia; chairs are brought to the place usually occupied by the orchestra, and the edge of the stage is used as a table, the servants alone being on the stage. The effect is as novel as it is charming.

How highly good musical talent is appreciated at country-house gatherings! If a fine tenor or soprano voice be discovered among the party, how the gifted owner is coaxed and entreated for one more, and just one more, until the "flattering unction" laid to the performer's soul is only equalled by the corresponding rawness of his or her throat. But amateur thrushes and nightingales are among the rarest of birds, nor are good pianoforte players much easier to meet with; indeed, the great majority of players have all the same harsh, disagreeable, reposeless style. When a new performer is requested to sit down to the piano, there is often a moment of courteous silence; but it is a fact that at the very first slight mistake she makes—whether false note, hesitation, or slur, some one is certain to turn to his neighbour, and, without in the least knowing why, to start some topic of conversation. The charm is broken, the interest gone, and the signal given for general chat, which, from beginning in a whisper, grows with the first *crescendo* of the player, and the efforts of the two to drown each other become gradually "fiercer and more fierce," until the final "crash-bang" puts an end to a performance which, musically speaking, ought never to have begun, though, if the object was merely to give a filip to the conversation, then—*à la bonheur*: there is not a word to be said—the end is amply attained.

And now for a word on gentlemen's evening dress. Why does not the fashion of dressing for dinner in knickerbockers, already so much in

vogue, *dans l'intimité*, in the country, become general? Last season in London there were several sets of knickerbocker quadrilles at the Caledonian ball, and several of those who took part in them went on to another ball or two in their new attire. Some even appeared in it the following night; but, spite of all efforts made by a few, the "movement" fell to the ground. And why? The real reason will probably be found in the fact that no coat has yet been invented which, while in keeping with the knickerbockers, shall yet avoid the character of a lounging-jacket.

But the commendable and deep-rooted love of *tenué* is, happily, not quite dead within us even now. The neat shoe and silk stocking surely render knickerbockers a far more appropriate dress in which to appear in a ladies' ball-room, than—than—what they replace, and the present garment is certainly a prodigious anomaly as regards dancing. But reform is needed from head to heel. How greatly would a picturesque costume for men enhance the effect of those noble old rooms with embossed ceilings, oak panels and stained windows, in which England is still so rich! Our present hideous dress makes downright eyesores of us whenever we venture within the charmed precincts where fine taste has left its magic spell.

Although visiting in the country may be the most enjoyable form of social life to the initiated, yet the vicissitudes to which the novice is exposed will appear from the following, which befel a young churchman, whose knowledge of society was confined to Cambridge. Appointed to a rural curacy, and his future abode not being quite ready for his reception, he was invited by the lord of the manor to spend the interim at the house of the latter, which was to be full of company at the time. When our hero reached his destination, he was ushered into a drawing-room where were many ladies, and greeted by the mistress of the house.

Yawning with hunger, he marvelled why nothing more substantial was offered to him by way of refreshment after his journey than some tea, of which the fair band were then partaking, and some very thin bread-and-butter. "Oh!" thinks he, "people eat so heartily at their early country dinners, I suppose they can't get up fresh appetites by tea-time." Presently one lady leaves the room, soon followed by a second and a third; and in a few minutes he is left alone, with the information that he will be conducted to his apartment whenever he shall please to ring the bell. "Well," says he to himself, "this is a strange welcome certainly, but doubtless they keep pristine hours in the country, and men are so exhausted by hunting or shooting, that they are glad to retire early: I shall see them to-morrow." So, finding there is nothing for it, he rings the bell and betakes him to his room.

He had not been asleep long, before he was startled into consciousness by a tremendous ringing. His course of action is instantly decided upon, and he rushes into the passage, *as he is*, screaming "Fire!" at the top of his voice, just as all the ladies are sweeping by, full-dress for dinner!

## An Historical Mystery.

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WITHIN a short walk of Dresden lies a pretty valley, the Plauensche Grund by name. At the end of the valley, the little river Weisseritz running close to it, stands a gloomy haunted mansion, called the Plauen Palais. No window of the house has been allowed to admit the light of day for nearly thirty years—closed, barred, and secured by outside shutters of the most complicated description, the house remains at this moment, as it has done for these long years, impervious to the light of day. Walls surround the Plauen Palais, and these walls are painted black; the shutters and the iron bars, and every moulding and cornice are black also—the house itself is of a deep dingy ochre colour, and the roof of a murky red. Wild trees, some of them large full-grown oaks, others of a younger date springing up between them, hem the mansion round, and choke up the garden, while creeping plants of almost preternatural luxuriance throw themselves over the black walls, and rest on the sluggish waters of the Weisseritz below.

Beyond the walls on one side lie the gardens of an adjoining Restaurant, which itself has a haunted look. They partake of the gloomy characteristics of the Plauen Palais; the fountains are broken and defaced, the walks ill-kept, and shaded by trees running to waste; the ground swampy; but there is a small door in the wall between the gardens and those of the Plauen Palais, and for years the inhabitants of this Restaurant have heard strange sounds proceeding from the Palais, and have seen many lights gleaming through the bars of its gloomy shutters. And these lights are still to be seen even in the daytime, although the thirty years' denizen of the dark abode has passed to her last account. Still the shutters and windows remain closed, and still the strange trampling noises issue at night from the garden.

Suppose at this time last year we could have penetrated into the interior of the Plauen Palais—could we have passed the guard of men who watched inside by night, and the guard of fierce hounds who lay in the passages leading to the apartment of the mistress of the mansion—what should we have found? What should we have seen in that apartment where the ancient Gräfin is sitting? She is old—very old; but the eyes are still bright—none of their intelligence is lost, and yet there is a displeasing acuteness, and entire want of softness in their glance; it would seem as if, the outward objects of life so long shut out from view, their restless gaze turned eagerly inward to the memories of long-past years. There is intellect in the face, and abundance of power, and if the beauty



which was once so remarkable no longer lingers there, it is because its softening lines have year by year been effaced by the force and pressure of an indomitable will. She wears a white cap suitable to her years, but of no modern fashion; her dress is a mixture of black and grey, loosely wrapping her figure and concealing its proportions. But what is that encircling her neck? Can it be a rope? It is a rope—the ends are hidden in her dress. And who is that man, his face masked, who enters unbidden her apartment? He bows lowly, without speaking; he approaches the ancient lady; he looks for a moment—it is enough; he retires, bowing as before.— Can this be the executioner from Dresden? It is so: every week he comes, to see if the terrible sign of justice unfulfilled remains where it was placed many many years ago. Is this true, we ask? It is one of the mysteries of the Plauen Palais.

Common and scanty is the furniture of the apartment, but there is much that is curious to be found there. There are piles of MSS. written in the French language—she is adding the finishing pages to the story of the last eighty-six years gone by. It is finished; and she inscribes on it a solemn injunction that the contents of the MSS. are not to be given to the public, until fifty years after her own decease.

She has been twice married, but no portraits of either of her husbands hang there to cheer the gloomy apartment; there is, however, on the table a beautiful miniature in its rich case. Whose are those Italian features which lie on the ivory, in calm, majestic beauty and repose? They are chiselled features of the great Emperor—Napoleon the First. Whose is the face of that lovely child in that second miniature painted by the same matchless hand? Whose are the fair bright locks which are plaited thickly at the back of the miniature? Doubtless the face and hair of a beloved lost child. No: the face is that of the young king of Rome—the bright locks, undimmed by time, were cut from his sunny hair fifty years before.

Both the miniatures are by Isabey, and were the gift of the great Emperor, before the star of his glory was dimmed in the disastrous campaign of Russia. The aged Gräfin looks on the picture of the Emperor and utters,—“*Etoile de ma vie!*” He had been to her the star of her existence.

Her thoughts, as she looks down on her homely grey robes, revert to the Palace of St. Cloud, where, dazzling in beauty, splendid in talent, she was presented in an attire and a blaze of jewels which, together with a long train of luxuries, obliged her to alienate a considerable portion of the property left her by her father. One more glance she gives to the lovely childish face of the miniature, and her thoughts suddenly rush forward from St. Cloud and its brilliant court to the events of the year 1830. Is it possible that she then conspired, supported by a considerable party in France, to carry off the Duke of Reichstadt from Vienna, and have him proclaimed Emperor of the French? It was so; and upon that she



thinks, and of her journey to Vienna, when, the plot being discovered, she was brought back, under a military escort, to Dresden. The year after, 1831, the Duke of Reichstadt died. Life had no longer any interest for her, and she retreated, not only from the world, but from the light of day.

Her memory wanders back to the time when a young son was born to her, about the time of the Russian campaign. She cannot but remember him, for her mind is strong and perfect. Where has he been ever since? Has she any miniature of him, to place side by side with that of the King of Rome? No. And what are her thoughts about him? We cannot tell that; this, too, is one of the mysteries of the Plauen Palais, shrouded in impenetrable darkness. And yet he lives—even in Dresden he lives—his occupations are menial, his face is the counterpart of the great Emperor's, and he calls himself Napoleon Buonaparte. Is it true that, supplied with money by the Saxon ambassador, he went in 1852 to Paris, to prosecute a claim as son of the late Emperor Napoleon I.—that his claim was not altogether repudiated by the then President of the Republic—that as he stood on the esplanade of the Hôtel des Invalides, witnessing the last honours paid to the memory of Marshal Soult, a gentleman put into his hand a card of introduction to the Minister Morny, adding in words, that he would receive from him a permission to visit the tomb of his father, thus fulfilling his earnest wish,—that he did receive permission, and did visit the tomb of the first Napoleon? He has appealed to the King of Saxony to be present when the Gräfin's will is read.

Her thoughts go back to the mysterious Heinrich, living as he has always lived for fifty years—transferred, when the estate of D—— was sold by herself, and again when it passed into other hands, like a serf from one owner to another—absolved from military service as incapable—apprenticed to a cooper—discharged as incapable of learning the trade,—employed by the purchasers of the estate as an errand-boy. The resemblance to herself is striking—she knows that he is looked upon as her son, and, for some cause or other, she sends him a small pittance in thalers for his subsistence. Does this balance the account in the strange hard mind of this eccentric woman? Has she no affections except for him who was "*l'étoile de sa vie*?"

Beyond the time of the great Emperor, she goes back in thought to her second husband, whose name she yet bears, and from whom she was divorced in 1813. When she departed from his house, did she leave behind her a young daughter? It is not improbable. Further back, her thoughts revert to her first husband, to whom—the young Graf zu L———she was married, at nineteen, in all the fresh bloom of her beauty and talents. Does she see in vision his young life cut off at the age of twenty-seven? Is there any connection between the rope which encircles her neck and the event of the 1st of August, 1800, when the Graf is said to have eaten a cherry cake which she had prepared, and, almost immediately

after, died? We cannot solve that mystery; but that also is believed to be true. We hope not. Was there a young son of the Graf zu L——? It appears probable, for the Plauen Palais is at this moment in possession, by police force, of his grandson.

Amid the crowd of dark recollections, does she also turn back to a time when she abjured the Lutheran faith of her family, and entered the Roman Church? It is believed that she has done so, and that she has left her property to the Church. This is one of the mysteries of the Plauen Palais. It is not unlikely that she rests on this step as an atonement for her strange deeds. She has confessed the dark passages of her existence, and thus got rid of some of its burden.

But now, at eighty, the review of life is over, and whatever may have been her griefs, her regrets, her reflections on the past, the old heaven of the great world of former days is not all gone. She is quite aware of her own value as the mysterious lady of the Plauen Palais. She leaves her dark abode one day in an old worn-out droska, and proceeds to the studio of the celebrated photographer, Herr Krone, in the Friederich's Allée. Dressed in her usual grey attire, and her white cap, she has her likeness taken, and she tells the artist that after she is gone, he will reap a rich harvest by her portrait.

She returns to her dark abode, and in a very few months she is on her death-bed. A female figure, elegant but plain in dress to conventual plainness, is seen in the chamber bending over the bed. Can this be the daughter of her second husband, the Count K——? To her the ancient Gräfin talks of her wilful chequered life; and even at that last hour of existence, she speaks of him, "*l'étoile de sa vie*," the great Napoleon, now lying in his grave nearly forty years.

A few of the heroes of Wagram and Austerlitz yet linger on sunny mornings on the esplanade of the Hôtel des Invalides, but how soon "the wave of time, returning hoarse, will sweep them from the strand!" Jerome, the last of the old race, is gone; Montholon with his "*fidélité du chien*," as the French were wont to call it, is gone; and now, too, this strange link between the present and the past is broken. We may look on, and contemplate with wonder, the spectacle of singular enduring devotion from one strong unscrupulous mind, to another mind, strong, great, and unscrupulous also.

On the 26th of April in this year died the Gräfin K—— within a few days of completing her eighty-sixth year. On the 28th of the same month her body was placed in a simple hearse; lonely and unattended, she was taken from the Plauen Palais, and solitary in death, as in life, she was buried in the Friederichstädter Kirchhof.

Some years ago, portions of this singular story of German romance were floating about the world, and though forgotten by some, others remember well the name of the heroine, the history of her first husband, and of the rope, which, in their edition, was said to have been twisted of silk and silver cords. It is a name not entirely unknown in the annals

of our history. It came into England with the House of Hanover, and to an individual of the family we are as a nation indebted for our hitherto exclusive possession of the musical glories of Handel. When the then King was angry that Handel would not be his Capellmeister at Hanover, and forbade him his presence, a distinguished member of the House of K—— suggested to him that he should compose some music to be performed during an excursion his Majesty was about to make on the Thames. Handel wrote his well-known Water Music. The King was charmed, and appeased, and the great musician was thenceforward established in England. Another member of the family led the Hanoverian horse at Waterloo against the Gräfin's idol, thus unconsciously, as it were, performing for his family the part of an avenging Nemesis.

The name has also formed a theme for poetry—but it may be well believed that the young lady celebrated by Hood was no relative of the family.



## My Maiden Brief.

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LATE on a certain May morning, as I was sitting at a modest breakfast in my "residence chambers," Pump Court, Temple, my attention was claimed by a single knock at an outer door, common to the chambers of Felix Polter, and of myself, Horace Penditton, both barristers-at-law of the Inner Temple.

The outer door was not the only article common to Polter and myself. We also shared what Polter (who wrote farces) was pleased to term a "property" clerk, who did nothing at all, and a "practicable" laundress, who did everything. There existed also a communion of interest in tea-cups, razors, gridirons, candlesticks, &c.; for although neither of us was particularly well supplied with the necessaries of domestic life, each happened to possess the very articles in which the other was deficient. So we got on uncommonly well together, each regarding his friend in the light of an indispensable other self. We had both embraced the "higher walk" of the legal profession, and were patiently waiting for the legal profession to embrace us.

The single knock raised some well-founded apprehensions in both our minds.

"Walker!" said I to the property clerk.

"Sir!"

"If that knock is for me, I'm out, you know."

"Of course, sir!"

"And Walker!" cried Polter.

"Sir!"

"If it's for me, I'm not at home!"

Polter always rejoiced if he could manage to make the conversation partake of a Maddisonian Mortonic character.

Mr. Walker opened the door. "Mr. Penditton's a-breakfasting with the Master of the Rolls, if it's him you want; and if it isn't, Mr. Polter's with the Attorney-General."

"You don't say so!" remarked the visitor; "then p'raps you'll give this to Mr. Penditton, as soon as the Master can make up his mind to part with him."

And, so saying, he handed to Walker a lovely parcel of brief-paper, tied up neatly with a piece of red tape, and minuted—

"Central Criminal Court, May Sessions, 1860.—The Queen on the prosecution of *Ann Back v. Elizabeth Briggs*. Brief for the prisoner. Mr. Penditton, one guinea.—Puddle and Shaddery, Hans Place."

So it had come at last! Only an Old Bailey brief, it is true; but

still a brief. We scarcely knew what to make of it. Polter looked at me, and I looked at Polter, and then we both looked at the brief.

It turned out to be a charge against Elizabeth Briggs, widow, of picking pockets in an omnibus. It appeared from my "instructions" that my client was an elderly lady, and religious. On the 2nd April then last she entered an Islington omnibus, with the view of attending a tea and prayer meeting in Bell Court, Islington. A woman in the omnibus missed her purse, and accused Mrs. Briggs, who sat on her right, of having stolen it. The poor soul, speechless with horror at the charge, was dragged out of the omnibus, and as the purse was found in a pocket on the left-hand side of her dress, she was given into custody. As it was stated by the police that she had been "in trouble" before, the infatuated magistrate who examined her committed her for trial.

"There, my boy, your fortune's made!" said Polter.

"But I don't see the use of my taking it," said I; "there's nothing to be said for her."

"Not take it? Won't you, though? I'll see about that. You *shall* take it, and you shall get her off, too! Highly respectable old lady—attentive member of well-known congregation—parson to speak to her character, no doubt. As honest as you are!"

"But the purse was found upon her!"

"Well, sir, and what of that? Poor woman left-handed, and pocket in left of dress. Robbed woman right-handed, and pocket in right of dress. Poor woman sat on right of robbed woman. Robbed woman, replacing her purse, slipped it accidentally into poor woman's pocket. Ample folds of dress, you know—crinolines overlapping, and all that. Splendid defence for you!"

"Well, but she's an old hand, it seems. The police know her."

"Police always do. 'Always know everybody'—police maxim. Swear anything, they will."

Polter really seemed so sanguine about it that I began to look at the case hopefully, and to think that something might be done with it. He talked to me to such effect that he not only convinced me that there was a good deal to be said in Mrs. Briggs's favour, but I actually began to look upon her as an innocent victim of circumstantial evidence, and determined that no effort should be wanting on my part to procure her release from a degrading but unmerited confinement.

Of the firm of Poddle and Shaddery I knew nothing whatever, and how they came to entrust Mrs. Briggs's case to me I can form no conception. As we (for Polter took so deep a personal interest in the success of Mrs. Briggs's case that he completely identified himself, in my mind, with her fallen fortunes) resolved to go to work in a thoroughly businesslike manner, we determined to commence operations by searching for the firm of Poddle and Shaddery in the *Law List*. To our dismay the *Law List* of that year had no record of Poddle, neither did Shaddery find a place in its pages. This was serious, and Polter did not

improve matters by suddenly recollecting that he had once heard an old Q.C. say that, as a rule, the farther west of Temple Bar, the shadier the attorney; so that assuming Polter's friend to have come to a correct conclusion on this point, a firm dating officially from Hans Place, and whose name did not appear in Mr. Dalbiac's *Law List*, was a legitimate object of suspicion. But Polter, who took a hopeful view of anything which he thought might lead to good farce "situations," and who probably imagined that my first appearance on any stage as counsel for the defence was likely to be rich in suggestions, remarked that they might possibly have been certificated since the publication of the last *Law List*; and as for the *dictum* about Temple Bar, why, the case of Poddle and Shaddery might be one of those very exceptions whose existence is necessary to the proof of every general rule. So Polter and I determined to treat the firm in a spirit of charity, and accept their brief.

As the May sessions of Oyer and Terminer did not commence until the 8th, I had four clear days in which to study my brief and prepare my defence. Besides, there was a murder case, and a desperate burglary or two, which would probably be taken first, so that it was unlikely that the case of the poor soul whose cause I had espoused would be tried before the 12th. So I had plenty of time to master what Polter and I agreed was one of the most painful cases of circumstantial evidence ever submitted to a British jury; and I really believe that, by the first day of the May sessions, I was intimately acquainted with the details of every case of pocket-picking reported in *Cox's Criminal Cases* and *Buckler's Short-hand Reports*.

On the night of the 11th I asked Bodger of Brazenose, Norton of Gray's Inn, Cadbury of the Lancers, and three or four other men, college chums principally, to drop in at Pump Court, and hear a rehearsal of my speech for the defence, in the forthcoming *cause célèbre* of the Queen on the prosecution of Ann Back *v.* Elizabeth Briggs. At nine o'clock they began to appear, and by ten all were assembled. Pipes and strong waters were produced, and Norton of Gray's was forthwith raised to the Bench by the style and dignity of Sir Joseph Norton, one of the barons of her Majesty's Court of Exchequer; Cadbury, Bodger, and another represented the jury; Wilkinson of Lincoln's Inn was counsel for the prosecution, Polter was clerk of arraigns, and Walker, my clerk, was the prosecutrix.

Everything went satisfactorily: Wilkinson broke down in his speech for the prosecution; his witness prevaricated and contradicted himself in a preposterous manner; and my speech for the defence was voted to be one of the most masterly specimens of forensic ingenuity that had ever come before the notice of the court; and the consequence was, that the prisoner (inadequately represented by a statuette of the Greek Slave) was discharged, and Norton (who would have looked more like a Baron of the Exchequer if he had looked less like a tipsy churchwarden) remarked that she left the court without a stain upon her character.

The court then adjourned for refreshment, and the conversation took a general turn, after canvassing the respective merits of "May it please your ludship," and "May it please you, my lud," as an introduction to a counsel's speech—a discussion which terminated in favour of the latter form, as being a trifle more independent in its character. I remember proposing that the health of Elizabeth Briggs should be drunk in a solemn and respectful bumper; and as the evening wore on, I am afraid I became exceedingly indignant with Cadbury because he had taken the liberty of holding up to public ridicule an imaginary (and highly undignified) *carte de visite* of my unfortunate client.

The 12th May, big with the fate of Penditton and of Briggs, dawned in the usual manner. At ten o'clock Polter and I drove up in wigs and gowns to the Old Bailey; as well because we kept those imposing garments at our chambers, not having any use for them elsewhere, as to impress passers-by, and the loungers below the court, with a conviction that we were not merely Old Bailey counsel, but had come down from our usual sphere of action at Westminster, to conduct a case of more than ordinary complication. Impressed with a sense of the propriety of presenting an accurate professional appearance, I had taken remarkable pains with my toilette. I had the previous morning shaved off a flourishing moustache, and sent Walker out for half-a-dozen serious collars, as substitutes for the unprofessional "lay-downs" I usually wore. I was dressed in a correct evening suit, and wore a pair of thin gold spectacles, and Polter remarked, that I looked the sucking bencher to the life. Polter, whose interest in the accuracy of my "get up" was almost fatherly, had totally neglected his own; and he made his appearance in the raggedest of beards and moustaches under his wig, and the sloppiest of cheap drab lounging-coats under his gown.

I modestly took my place in the back row of the seats allotted to the bar; Polter took his in the very front, in order to have an opportunity, at the close of the case, of telling the leading counsel, in the hearing of the attorneys, the name and address of the young and rising barrister who had just electrified the court. In various parts of the building I detected Cadbury, Wilkinson, and others, who had represented judge, jury, and counsel, on the previous evening. They had been instructed by Polter (who had had some experience in "packing" a house) to distribute themselves about the court, and, at the termination of the speech for the defence, to give vent to their feelings in that applause which is always so quickly suppressed by the officers of a court of justice. I was rather annoyed at this, as I did not consider it altogether legitimate; and my annoyance was immensely increased when I found that my three elderly maiden aunts, to whom I had been foolish enough to confide the fact of my having to appear on the 12th, were seated in state in that portion of the court allotted to friends of the bench and bar, and busied themselves by informing everybody within whisper-shot, that I was to defend Elizabeth Briggs, and that this was my first brief. It was some little consolation,



however, to find that the unceremonious manner in which the facts of the cases that preceded mine were explained and commented upon by judge, jury, and counsel, caused those ladies great uneasiness, and indeed compelled them, on one or two occasions, to beat an unceremonious retreat.

At length the clerk of arraigns called the case of Briggs, and with my heart in my mouth I began to try to recollect the opening words of my speech for the defence, but I was interrupted in that hopeless task by the appearance of Elizabeth in the dock.

She was a pale, elderly widow, rather buxom, and remarkably neatly dressed, in slightly rusty mourning. Her hair was arranged in two sausage curls, one on each side of her head, and looped in two festoons over the forehead. She appeared to feel her position acutely, and although she did not weep, her red eyes showed evident traces of recent tears. She grasped the edge of the dock and rocked backwards and forwards, accompanying the motion with a low moaning sound, that was extremely touching. Polter looked back at me with an expression which plainly said, "If ever an innocent woman appeared in that dock, that woman is Elizabeth Briggs!"

The clerk of arraigns now proceeded to charge the jury. "Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner at the bar, Elizabeth Briggs, is indicted for that she did, on the 2nd April last, steal from the person of Ann Back a purse containing ten shillings and fourpence, the moneys of the said Ann Back. There is another count to the indictment, charging her with having received the same, knowing it to have been stolen. To both of these counts the prisoner has pleaded 'Not guilty,' and it is your charge to try whether she is guilty or not guilty." Then to the bar, "Who appears in this case?"

Nobody replying in behalf of the crown, I rose and remarked that I appeared for the defence.

A counsel here said that he believed the brief for the prosecution was entrusted to Mr. Porter, but that that gentleman was engaged at the Middlesex Sessions, in a case which was likely to occupy several hours, and that he (Mr. Porter) did not expect that Briggs's case would come on that day.

A consultation then took place between the judge and the clerk of arraigns. At its termination, the latter functionary said, "Who is the junior counsel present?"

To my horror, up jumped Polter, and said, "I think it's very likely that I am the junior counsel in court. My name is Polter, and I was only called last term!"

A titter ran through the crowd, but Polter, whose least fault was bashfulness, only smiled benignly at those around him.

Another whispering between judge and clerk. At its conclusion, the clerk handed a bundle of papers to Polter, saying, at the same time,

"Mr. Polter, his lordship wishes you to conduct the prosecution."

"Certainly," said Polter; and he opened the papers, glanced at them, and rose to address the court.

He began by requesting that the jury would take into consideration the fact that he had only that moment been placed in possession of the brief for the prosecution of the prisoner at the bar, who appeared, from what he could gather from a glance at his instructions, to have been guilty of as heartless a robbery as ever disgraced humanity. He would endeavour to do his duty, but he feared that, at so short a notice, he should scarcely be able to do justice to the brief with which he had been most unexpectedly entrusted. He then went on to state the case in a masterly manner, appearing to gather the facts, with which, of course, he was perfectly intimate, from the papers in his hand. He commented on the growing frequency of omnibus robberies, and then went on to say:—

"Gentlemen, I am at no loss to anticipate the defence on which my learned friend will base his hope of inducing you to acquit that wretched woman. I don't know whether it has ever been your misfortune to try criminal cases before, but if it has, you will be able to anticipate his defence as certainly as I can. He will probably tell you, because the purse was found in the left-hand pocket of that miserable woman's dress, that she is left-handed, and on that account wears her pocket on the left side, and he will then, if I am not very much mistaken, ask the prosecutrix if she is not right-handed, and, lastly, he will ask you to believe that the prosecutrix, sitting on the prisoner's left, slipped the purse accidentally into the prisoner's pocket. But, gentlemen, I need not remind you that the facts of these omnibus robberies are always identical. The prisoner always *is* left-handed, the prosecutrix always *is* right-handed, and the prosecutrix always *does* slip the purse accidentally into the prisoner's pocket, instead of her own. My lord will tell you that this is so, and you will know how much faith to place upon such a defence, should my friend think proper to set it up." He ended by entreating the jury to give the case their attentive consideration, and stated that he relied confidently on an immediate verdict of "Guilty." He then sat down, saying to the usher, "Call Ann Back."

Ann Back, who was in court, shuffled up into the witness-box and was duly sworn. Polter then drew out her evidence bit by bit, helping her with leading questions of the most flagrant description. I knew that I ought not to allow this, but I was too horrified at the turn matters had taken to interfere. At the conclusion of the examination in chief Polter sat down triumphantly, and I rose to cross-examine.

"You are right-handed, Mrs. Back?" (*Laughter.*)

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Very good. I've nothing else to ask you."

So Mrs. Back stood down, and the omnibus conductor took her place. His evidence was not material, and I declined to cross-examine. The policeman who had charge of the case followed the conductor, and his evidence was to the effect that the purse was found in her pocket.

I felt that this witness ought to be cross-examined, but not having anything ready, I allowed him to stand down. A question, I am sorry to say, then occurred to me, and I requested his lordship to allow the witness to be recalled.

"You say you found the purse in her pocket, my man?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you find anything else?"

"Yes, sir."

"What?"

"Two other purses, a watch with the bow broken, three handkerchiefs, two silver pencil-cases, and a hymn-book." (*Roars of laughter.*)

"You may stand down."

"That is the case, my lord," said Polter.

It was now my turn to address the court. What could I say? I believe I observed, that, undeterred by my learned friend's opening speech, I *did* intend to set up the defence he had anticipated. I set it up, but I don't think it did much good. The jury, who were perfectly well aware that this was Polter's first case, had no idea but that I was an old hand at it; and no doubt thought me an uncommonly clumsy one. They had made every allowance for Polter, who needed nothing of the kind, and they made none at all for me, who needed all they had at their disposal. I soon relinquished my original line of defence, and endeavoured to influence the jury by vehement assertions of my personal conviction of the prisoner's innocence. I warmed with my subject, for Polter had not anticipated me here, and I believe I grew really eloquent. I think I staked my professional reputation on her innocence, and I sat down expressing my confidence in a verdict that would restore the unfortunate lady to a circle of private friends, several of whom were waiting in the court below to testify to her excellent character.

"Call witnesses to Mrs. Briggs's character," said I.

"Witnesses to the character of Briggs!" shouted the crier.

The cry was repeated three or four times outside the court; but there was no response.

"No witnesses to Briggs's character here, my lord!" said the crier.

Of course I knew this very well; but it sounded respectable to expect them.

"Dear, dear," said I, "this is really most unfortunate. They must have mistaken the day."

"Shouldn't wonder," observed Polter, rather drily.

I was not altogether sorry that I had no witnesses to adduce, as I am afraid that they would scarcely have borne the test of Polter's cross-examination. Besides, if I had examined witnesses for the defence, Polter would have been entitled to a reply, of which privilege he would, I was sure, avail himself.

Mr. Baron Bounderby proceeded to sum up, grossly against the prisoner, as I then thought, but, as I have since had reason to believe, most

impartially. He went carefully over the evidence, and told the jury that if they believed the witnesses for the prosecution, they should find the prisoner guilty, and if they did not—why, they should acquit her. The jury were then directed by the crier to “consider their verdict,” which they couldn’t possibly have done, for they immediately returned a verdict of “Guilty.” The prisoner not having anything to say in arrest of judgment, the learned judge proceeded to pronounce sentence—inquiring, first of all, whether anything was known about her?

A policeman stepped forward, and stated that she had been twice convicted at this court of felony, and once at the Middlesex Sessions.

Mr. Baron Bounderby, addressing the prisoner, told her that she had been most properly convicted, on the clearest possible evidence; that she was an accomplished thief, and a most dangerous one; and that the sentence of the court was that she be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for the space of eighteen calendar months.

No sooner had the learned judge pronounced this sentence than the poor soul stooped down, and taking off a heavy boot, flung it at my head, as a reward for my eloquence on her behalf; accompanying the assault with a torrent of invective against my abilities as a counsel, and my line of defence. The language in which her oration was couched was perfectly shocking. The boot missed me, but hit a reporter on the head, and to this fact I am disposed to attribute the unfavourable light in which my speech for the defence was placed in two or three of the leading daily papers next morning. I hurried out of court as quickly as I could, and, hailing a Hansom, I dashed back to chambers, pitched my wig at a bust of Lord Brougham, bowled over Mrs. Briggs’s prototype with my gown, packed up, and started that evening for the West coast of Cornwall. Polter, on the other hand, remained in town, and got plenty of business in that and the ensuing session, and afterwards on circuit. He is now a flourishing Old Bailey counsel, while I am as briefless as ever.

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## On the Stage.

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THINGS dramatic and things theatrical are often confounded together in the minds of English people, who, being for the most part neither the one nor the other, speak and write of them as if they were identical, instead of, as they are, so dissimilar that they are nearly opposite.

That which is dramatic in human nature is the passionate emotional humorous element, the simplest portion of our composition, after our mere instincts, to which it is closely allied, and this has no relation whatever, beyond its momentary excitement and gratification, to that which imitates it, and is its theatrical reproduction; the dramatic is the *real*, of which the theatrical is the *false*.

Both nations and individuals in whom the dramatic temperament strongly preponderates are rather remarkable for a certain vivid simplicity of nature, which produces sincerity and vehemence of emotion and expression, but is entirely without the *consciousness* which is never absent from the theatrical element.

Children are always dramatic, but only theatrical when they become aware that they are objects of admiring attention; in which case the assuming and dissembling capacity of *acting* develops itself comically and sadly enough in them.

The Italians, nationally and individually, are dramatic; the French, on the contrary, theatrical; we English of the present day are neither the one nor the other, though our possession of the noblest dramatic literature in the world proves how deeply at one time our national character was imbued with elements which are now so latent as almost to be of doubtful existence; while, on the other hand, our American progeny are, as a nation, devoid of the dramatic element, and have a considerable infusion of that which is theatrical, delighting, like the Athenians of old, in processions, shows, speeches, oratory, demonstrations, celebrations, and declarations, and such displays of public and private sentiment as would be repugnant to English taste and feeling; to which theatrical tendency, and the morbid love of excitement which is akin to it, I attribute the fact that Americans, both nationally and individually, are capable of a certain sympathy with the French character, in which we are wanting.

The combination of the power of representing passion and emotion with that of imagining or conceiving it, that is, of the theatrical talent with the dramatic temperament, is essential to make a good actor; their combination in the highest possible degree alone makes a great one.

There is a specific comprehension of effect and the means of producing it which, in some persons, is a distinct capacity, and this forms what

actors call the study of their profession; and in this, which is the alloy necessary to make theatrical that which is only dramatic, lies the heart of their mystery and the snare of their craft in more ways than one: and this, the actor's *business*, goes sometimes absolutely against the dramatic temperament, which is nevertheless essential to it.

Every day lessens the frequency of this specific combination among ourselves, for the dramatic temperament, always exceptional in England, is becoming daily more so under the various adverse influences of a state of civilization and society which fosters a genuine dislike to exhibitions of emotion, and a cynical disbelief in the reality of it, both necessarily repressing, first, its expression, and next, its existence. On the other hand, greater intellectual cultivation and a purer and more elevated taste are unfavourable to the existence of the true theatrical spirit; and English actors of the present day are of the public, by being "nothing if not critical," and are not of their craft, having literally ceased to know "what belongs to a frippery." They have lost for the most part alike the dramatic emotional temperament and the scenic science of mere effect, and our stage is and must be supplied, if supplied at all, by persons less sophisticated and less civilized. The plays brought out and revived at our theatres of late years bear doleful witness to this. We have in them archæology, ethnology, history, geography, botany (even to the curiosity of ascertaining the Danish wild-flowers that Ophelia might twist with her mad straws), and upholstery; everything, in short, but acting, which it seems we cannot have.

When Mrs. Siddons, in her spectacles and mob-cap, read *Macbeth* or *King John*, it was one of the grandest dramatic achievements that could be imagined, with the least possible admixture of the theatrical element; the representation of the *Duke's Motto*, with all its resources of scenic effect, is a striking and interesting theatrical entertainment, with hardly an admixture of that which is truly dramatic.

Garrick was, I suppose, the most perfect actor that our stage has ever produced, equalling in tragedy and comedy the greatest performers of both; but while his dramatic organization enabled him to represent with exquisite power and pathos the principal characters of Shakspeare's noblest plays, his theatrical taste induced him to garble, desecrate, and disfigure the masterpieces of which he was so fine an interpreter, in order to produce or enhance those peculiar effects which constitute the chief merit and principal attraction of all theatrical exhibitions.

Mrs. Siddons could lay no claim to versatility—it was not in her nature; she was without mobility of mind, countenance, or manner; and her dramatic organization was in that respect inferior to Garrick's; but out of a family of twenty-eight persons, all of whom made the stage their vocation, she alone pre-eminently combined the qualities requisite to make a great theatrical performer in the highest degree.

Another member of that family—a foreigner by birth, and endowed with the most powerful and vivid dramatic organization—possessed in so

small a degree the faculty of the stage, that the parts which she represented successfully were few in number, and though among them there were some dramatic *creations* of extraordinary originality and beauty, she never rose to the highest rank in her profession, nor could claim in any sense the title of a great theatrical artist.—This was my mother. And I suppose no member of that large histrionic family was endowed to the same degree with the natural dramatic temperament. The truth of her intonation, accent, and emphasis, made her common speech as good as a play to hear, (oh, how much better than some we *do* hear!) and whereas I have seen the Shakspeare of my father, and the Shakspeare and Milton of Mrs. Siddons, with every emphatic word underlined and accentuated, lest they should omit the right inflection in delivering the lines, my mother could no more have needed such notes whereby to speak *true* than she would a candle to have walked by at noonday. She was an incomparable critic; and though the intrepid sincerity of her nature made her strictures sometimes more accurate than acceptable, they were inestimable for the fine tact for truth, which made her instinctively reject in nature and art whatever sinned against it.

I do not know whether I shall be considered competent to pass a judgment on myself in this matter, but I think I am. Inheriting from my father a theatrical descent of two generations and my mother's vivid and versatile organization, the stage itself, though it became from the force of circumstances my career, was, partly from my nature and partly from my education, so repugnant to me, that I failed to accomplish any result at all worthy of my many advantages. I imagine I disappointed alike those who did and those who did not think me endowed with the talent of my family, and incurred, towards the very close of my theatrical career, the severe verdict from one of the masters of the stage of the present day, that I was "ignorant of the first rudiments of my profession."

In my father and mother I have had frequent opportunities of observing in most marked contrast the rapid intuitive perception of the dramatic instinct in an organization where it preponderated, and the laborious process of logical argument by which the same result, on a given question, was reached by a mind of different constitution (my father's), and reached with much doubt and hesitation, caused by the very application of analytical reasoning. The slow mental process *might* with time have achieved a right result in all such cases; but the dramatic instinct, aided by a fine organization, was unerring; and this leads me to observe, that there is no reason whatever to expect that fine actors shall be necessarily profound commentators on the parts that they sustain most successfully, but rather the contrary.

I trust I shall not be found wanting in due respect for the greatness that is gone from us, if I say that Mrs. Siddons' analysis of the part of "Lady Macbeth" was to be found *alone* in her representation of it—of the magnificence of which the "essay" she has left upon the character gives not the faintest idea.



If that great actress had possessed the order of mind capable of conceiving and producing a philosophical analysis of any of the wonderful poetical creations which she so wonderfully embodied, she would surely never have been able to embody them as she did. For to whom are all things given? and to whom were ever given, in such abundant measure, consenting and harmonious endowments of mind and body for the peculiar labour of her life?

The dramatic faculty, as I have said, lies in a power of apprehension quicker than the disintegrating process of critical analysis, and when it is powerful, and the organization fine, as with Mrs. Siddons, perception rather than reflection reaches the aim proposed; and the persons endowed with this specific gift will hardly unite with it the mental qualifications of philosophers and metaphysicians; no better proof of which can be adduced than Mrs. Siddons herself, whose performances were, in the strict sense of the word, excellent, while the two treatises she has left upon the characters of "Queen Constance" and "Lady Macbeth"—two of her finest parts—are feeble and superficial. Kean, who possessed, beyond all actors whom I have seen, tragic inspiration, could very hardly, I should think, have given a satisfactory reason for any one of the great effects which he produced. Of Mdle. Rachel, whose impersonations fulfilled to me the idea of perfect works of art of their kind, I have heard, from one who knew her well, that her intellectual processes were limited to the consideration of the most purely mechanical part of her vocation; and Pasta, the great lyric tragedian, who, Mrs. Siddons said, was capable of giving her lessons, replied to the observation, "*Vous avez dû beaucoup étudier l'antique*," "*Je l'ai beaucoup senti*." The reflective and analytical quality has little to do with the complex process of acting, and is alike remote from what is dramatic and what is theatrical.

There is something anomalous in that which we call the dramatic art that has often arrested my attention and exercised my thoughts; the special gift and sole industry of so many of my kindred, and the only labour of my own life, it has been a subject of constant and curious speculation with me, combining as it does elements at once so congenial and so antagonistic to my nature.

Its most original process, that is, the conception of the character to be represented, is a mere reception of the creation of another mind—and its mechanical part, that is, the representation of the character thus apprehended, has no reference to the intrinsic, poetical, or dramatic merit of the original creation, but merely to the accuracy and power of the actor's perception of it; thus the character of "Lady Macbeth" is as majestic, awful, and poetical, whether it be worthily filled by its pre-eminent representative, Mrs. Siddons, or unworthily by the most incompetent of ignorant provincial tragedy queens.

This same dramatic art has neither fixed rules, specific principles, indispensable rudiments, nor fundamental laws; it has no basis in positive science, as music, painting, sculpture, and architecture have; and differs

from them all, in that the mere appearance of spontaneity, which is an acknowledged assumption, is its chief merit. And yet—

This younger of the sister arts,  
Where all their charms combine—

requires in its professors the imagination of the poet, the ear of the musician, the eye of the painter and sculptor, and over and above these, a faculty peculiar to itself, inasmuch as the actor personally fulfils and embodies his conception; his own voice is his cunningly modulated instrument; his own face the canvas whereon he portrays the various expressions of his passion; his own frame the mould in which he casts the images of beauty and majesty that fill his brain; and whereas the painter and sculptor may select, of all possible attitudes, occupations, and expressions, the most favourable to the beautiful effect they desire to produce, and fix, and bid it so remain fixed for ever, the actor must live and move through a temporary existence of poetry and passion, and preserve throughout its duration that ideal grace and dignity, of which the canvas and the marble give but a silent and motionless image. And yet it is an art that requires no study worthy of the name: it creates nothing—it perpetuates nothing; to its professors, whose personal qualifications form half their merit, is justly given the meed of personal admiration, and the reward of contemporaneous popularity is well bestowed on those whose labour consists in exciting momentary emotion. Their most persevering and successful efforts can only benefit, by a passionate pleasure of at most a few years' duration, the play-going public of their own immediate day, and they are fitly recompensed with money and applause, to whom may not justly belong the rapture of creation, the glory of patient and protracted toil, and the love and honour of grateful posterity.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE

## Margaret Denzil's History.

(Annotated by her Husband.)

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### AT MADAME LAMONT'S.

MADAME LAMONT'S method with a newly-bereaved pupil was to leave her alone with her grief till the first tremblings of the shock of separation had ceased. And so when my company had quite departed (I watching them, with various feelings, at the casement), she brought some cakes and a small glass of wine into the drawing-room, and placed them near me by the window, saying in a bland voice which nicely balanced the severity of her manner, "Now, my dear, you want to cry all alone; I know it is the way with all good girls at such times. When the storm is past, we will begin to make friends of each other; only that can never be if you do not dry your tears and drink your wine by the time I come to ask you to take tea with me." With that she kissed my forehead, as ceremoniously as if it were "the book," and left me, far more disposed than she imagined to drink the wine at once and not to cry at all. Indeed, I did drink the wine as soon afterward as I dared, and ate all the cakes.

The afternoon wore away in silence. The sunshine poured in upon me through the window, with eager, tremulous, unconscious life; while all the life that I was conscious of, as I sat there in a maze of vaguest, dreamiest speculation, was like a candle-flame etherealized, almost drowned and lost in the sunlight. But as the dusk came on, the lamp of life within me burned in a brighter, homelier, warmer way, and when, by and by, I saw a lady walk up to the house with another little girl, I dropped fairly into the sphere of my common senses, and even felt equal to the ordeal of taking tea with madame, whenever she pleased to send for me. Nor was it long before I was summoned to madame's sitting-room.

The other little girl was not there, much to my disappointment. She, as I had already divined from the miserable apprehensive glances she cast about her, was also a new pupil. A walk in the fields had failed to divert her, and she had begged permission to go to bed outright, with her poor little headache.

But the lady was there—she with whom a walk in the fields had failed to be diverting. She was madame's daughter and assistant—a woman no longer young, and her name was Weariness. When I entered the room, she was sitting at table with her back to the door, her head resting on her hand, over which long thick masses of ruddy brown hair drooped with an expression of languor subtle beyond description. It was not till her

mother, taking me by the hand, led me up to her, that Miss Lamont turned her head, to fix on me a pair of great eyes without a spark of welcome or inquiry in them. They were the eyes of weariness, too tired for sympathy with anything. The drooping lines of her somewhat coarse mouth also told of a weariness that would fain become oblivion. Her smile was a smile without life; the hand was heavy and cold in which she took mine, saying simply, "Good evening, my dear!"

Madame Lamont looked at her daughter rather surprised and impatient, I thought, as if she would have said, "This is not the way of business even, Charlotte." Upon which the daughter made reply after the same manner, but more clearly. She did not care, her eyes said; and if the sea came up and drowned all schools and schoolmistresses, still she would not care. So I interpreted the glances which passed between the ladies—glances which they took no great pains to disguise in the presence of a country-born child of thirteen.

Madame made amends. She placed a chair for me at her side, gave me some tea, and began forthwith to make known, in a bubbling fountain of talk, how pleasant my life should be at Valley House School. Not that I, all forlorn, heard much that she said. Besides, I was chiefly intent upon the countenance of Miss Lamont, who said nothing, but amused herself by dissolving pieces of sugar in her spoon for the pleasure of seeing them sapped and falling into ruin. It is a hypochondriacal employment; and as I looked upon the crumbling rocks of sweetness and then upon the lady's fallen face, I wandered miles away into the speculation whether she had not at some time suffered under a process of similar kind. Valley House School was clearly no paradise for her; but that, perhaps, was because she was now too old for any particular enjoyment of the privilege which madame most enlarged upon—permission to feed the chickens and to find their eggs.

"Have you pigs, too?" I asked; for I felt it was time for me to say something.

"Pigs!" echoed madame, with a little laugh.

"We will get one for you, if you would like it!" said Miss Lamont, creamily unkind, but without interest enough to lift her eyes from her sugar ruin.

"Roast!" madame added, as if it were a joke—pitying my confusion. For here was my old fortune begun again already. How had I betrayed, in my very first words, on my very first evening, the vulgar associations of my "sphere!" And how clearly those associations must appear about me since it was actually proposed to keep a pig at Valley House for my consolation. If that could really have been meant! or if it was a joke! I blushed so much that my shame and vexation reddened the silence that fell on us, or so it seemed to me, with my eyes burning hot.

"Charlotte," said Madame Lamont, speaking softly and rapidly in French, but not so quickly that her meaning escaped me, "a little consideration, I pray you. What has happened I cannot divine, but let us

keep our bitterness for ourselves. This little one is to have a bad night, and we should remember that it can begin too soon."

"Mamma," returned her daughter, coldly, in the same tongue ("Maman!") and she so very, very old—more than thirty!) "blame the weather. I do not know why, but this is a day of the devil for me! I do not know! What does the almanac say?"

I named the day, in plain English.

Both ladies were startled at the interruption—not so much, it may be, because of my plain English as because of the name of the day. Perhaps it was a memorable day—the anniversary of the time when that tear flood came which melted the younger lady into the moist clay image of a woman she appeared to-night; and perhaps the day, coming round again, was felt without being remembered or observed till I named it.

Madame glanced at her daughter uneasily. At the moment I spoke, her daughter looked up at me, fairly for the first time; and as she looked her face was no longer uninquiring and no longer pale. Dead to all affairs of human interest before, some life was suddenly called back into it at the sound of my voice; but even then only in a bewildered manner. It lingered a little while, as if it could not possibly have any business to stay, and then almost died out again. Slowly she turned her eyes away to think apart. But as if she was not solitude enough for herself at that moment, she presently left the room, murmuring the word "curious" as she gazed on me in passing, with eyes that seemed rather to listen than to see.

Madame Mère—who looked more angry than anxious, without showing much feeling of any kind—apologized for her daughter, who had really made me uneasy. It was a headache; a torturing fit of *ennui*. "But *you* are a brave little girl," said she: "so much is plain already."

From this point it was easy to glide again into the stream of entertaining prattle which my question about the pigs had interrupted. I hope I gave proper attention to it at the time. Now I only remember how much more at ease I felt when madame's exertions to amuse me began to flag; as they did by and by when she became as much absorbed in her own reflections as I in mine.

Her daughter's long absence vexed her. She rang the bell, and her maid entered. Where was Miss Charlotte? In her room. The maid had occasion to speak with her just now, and knocked, but was not admitted.

"Wait," said madame; and, going to her writing-table, took a broad sheet of paper and scribbled a message upon it. The sheet had not yet been folded, however, when a rustling was heard in the hall, and Miss Lamont entered—changed for the better. Her mother slipped the message into the desk.

"I am so glad you have come down," said she. "You know I must see Miss Forster's boxes unpacked and her things placed out tidily; and—and I scarcely know what else does not need my attention."

"I have not forgotten that, mamma. Leave Miss Forster to my care;" and in token that she seriously designed to entertain me, Miss Lamont exhibited some books which she had brought down with her.

My heart fainted. What a prospect was this before me! It was with positive fear that I raised my head to know the worst, when I heard the door shut madame out and her daughter in. But there was little to be alarmed at. Already the headache, the torturing fit of *ennui*, seemed to have passed away; and though no arrangement of her hair that Miss Lamont ever achieved gave it a look of life, its ruddy masses were now less moribund than when she took them from the room. They were displayed in ringlets—great heavy curls, clustered together without any of their natural gaiety, but rather like hybernating serpentine creatures, tawny and innocent. Embellished in this out-of-date fashion—which I never afterwards saw her assume, and which on this occasion was only put on by way of setting herself in harmony with certain tyrannical reminiscences,—she sat down to devote herself to me.

And now it appeared that not she, but I was the dreadful personage. Emotions of which I had no conception then, simmered in the heart of Weariness; and of the two, I was really calmer when she took me by the hand, though all she had to ask was whether I did not think her rude just now? Of course I thought she had been disagreeable, and so made no answer.

"Speak, Margaret," she said, "I want to hear you speak."

"Well, I did not know what I was saying, ma'am, when I asked about—about the pigs."

"And I scarcely knew what I answered."

"That was because of your headache?"

"Because of my headache," repeated Echo, drowsily—looking on my mouth, meanwhile, as though she would fain see my words as well as hear them.

"Do you read nicely, Margaret?"

"I don't know," I replied, with my eyes already wandering in a book of religious poems that lay on the table. "Will you hear me?"

"Exactly what I wish. But not from that book—poetry is not the best test. Take this one, child."

"This one" was a story-book—no other than the *Sorrows of Werther*; and Miss Lamont opened it at a place where the name of the heroine appeared all over the page.

"About Charlotte," I said. "That is your name, Miss Lamont;" an idle remark in itself, but significant enough if the book was selected not simply because it was a love-story (the worst of reasons), but because the name Charlotte had to be repeated so often in reading it.

I read. It was my first introduction to literature of its kind, and I was so charmed and bewildered, especially as I was thrown at once into the middle of the story, that the mere graces of elocution must soon have

been forgotten. 'Twas all the same to Miss Lamont. Once when I looked up from the book, I saw that she listened with as much abstraction as a child at a fairy tale, and that her eyes were still fixed upon my lips. Now I know why. She had read of Werther's sorrows for herself more than once; her interest was in *my* reading—in my voice, that repeated "Charlotte, Charlotte," so many times, and always tenderly; for was not this a love-story?

At the end of the chapter I stopped; but it was not till some moments afterwards that my listener ceased to listen.

"That will do," she said at length, putting on her governmental dignity. "You read very well; and I—I wonder where you found that beautiful voice? But it is a nonsensical book, and we'll have no more of it."

With that she put the heavenly volume of inspirations into her pocket, and left me to the *Christian Year*, while she occupied herself with a little brown Latin book. It was not long, however, before my acquirements were again investigated.

"Do you read writing easily, Margaret? That is important too."

I could only shake my head at this. I knew nothing of writing but my own exercises.

"Let us see. I think I've something here," said Miss Lamont, and took from her pocket a paper of verses which appeared to me at first sight totally illegible; all but a line of embossed printing at the top, "—th Hussars."

"I have never seen such handwriting as this," I said, apologetically.

"No," answered Miss Lamont, hesitating; "I think—I cannot think you have. But read all the same, Margaret. It is a soldier's writing, and if you are not a soldier's daughter, you ought to have been."

Thus encouraged, I struggled forthwith into the first line, though it began with the name of a place which I had never before heard of.

On—on Linden when the scene—the sun was low,

and so on to the second stanza, at which point Madame Lamont entered unexpectedly.

The interruption was most timely and welcome, I thought; but not so did it seem to my sad inquisitor. She took the paper from my hands abruptly, folding it up as she said, "I see it is too difficult for you."

All this while madame looked on from the middle of the room, quietly remarking when the paper had been returned into Miss Lamont's pocket—

"I think I must be a little crazy to-night."

"Mamma?"

"As for you, my dear," continued madame, turning toward me with a smile, "it is settled that you are always to remain a child. Do you know your toys were packed with your books and clothes?"

"My toys, madame?"



"All, I should say, down to baby's rattle, and the ivory ring that brought your teeth into the world."

This was overwhelming news. "It must be a mistake, I pleaded."

"Well, my dear, the toys were all in a box by themselves, and it may be so." But madame was evidently not quite satisfied with her own explanation, and certainly it gave no satisfaction to me. Not that I imagined any special significance in this freak of my mother's, yet more than that it was done to make me ashamed.

If that was her object, she succeeded well. I *was* ashamed. I could have cried outright if I had not been too proud, which madame perceiving, she affected to doubt no longer that the box had come by mistake. But now I luckily remembered that my luggage had been placed in the cart before daybreak that morning—in darkness almost—and that the toy-box was in my room, where it might naturally have been caught up unobserved with the others.

That was explanation enough for Madame Lamont; but I began to doubt more and more; and my head grew dizzy; and my eyes craved for darkness, and I asked permission to retire. That was not enough, though: I begged that I might sleep alone.

"Which means, Margaret, that you propose to lie awake and fret."

"No," said I, quite sincerely.

But madame doubted me, producing some lozenges which I was to be sure to take before composing myself to rest; they would cause me to sleep better, she said.

Miss Lamont went to madame's desk for paper to wrap the lozenges in, and took out that sheet which had the message scribbled upon it. Whether some big appealing "Dear Charlotte" caught Miss Lamont's eyes, I cannot tell; but while I waited,—shivering I knew not why,—to be taken to my strange bed, she read the message under the lamp in her short-sighted way, and then handed it to her mother, saying, in a subdued tone, "You do not know. It is nothing, of course; a vocal coincidence, let us call it; a fancy which I have done with. By and by I will tell you."

I wished, as I trembled out of the room, that people would not indulge themselves with mysterious sayings which it was stupid to suppose I did not notice. If I had only been left to myself all the evening with a book which asked no more attention than I could fairly give—! And if those toys had not come to make me ashamed, and put all sorts of bothering ideas into the tired head of poor me—! Yes, there they were. Madame had caused them to be brought to my room, saying, as she bade me good night at the door, "I thought you should see them, my dear, for this once more; they will be company for you, perhaps; but to-morrow we must lock them away in the box-room, of course." I answered that they might as well be taken there directly; but was not sorry, somehow, to hear the reply, "Never mind for to-night."

And as soon as they were gone—mistress and maid—I felt an irresistible longing to get up and look at these toys. True, there was no

light in the room, but the night was very clear, and by pulling up the blind and haling the box to the window, I could make out the old familiar things well enough, I thought.

And so it was. The window was long and low. I placed the box beneath it, going softly on my naked feet; and kneeling down, I found the darkness growing lighter as I drew out first one forgotten toy and then another. They were poor things, bought for a few pence in a country town: little horses of wafer pattern, headless long ago; waggons with wheels and without them; a musical cart that twanged yet; dolls of many kinds, but all battered, soiled, and tawdry. There were my first picture-books; my first needle-case; bits of "patch-work," with the needles sticking in them; and there, too, among the many things—everything of this kind which I remembered to have possessed—was the box my English governess gave me: still locked.

I don't know how it was, but I felt very old when I had gathered these things into my lap and looked at them—remembering when this and that was brought home, and how that it was a fine day, or a wet day. I felt very old, and sad, and serious too. Sad, in a way easy to feel but hard to explain. Serious, for there was nothing here that I had not ceased to play with long ago; then why were they sent? To make me ashamed? or because my mother thought I should really like to have the dear old rubbish? Not by mistake; that I had already found out; for the box had been wrapped in canvas like the rest. There was another reason: Was it in token that I was never to go back to the forest any more? Was it as much as to say that they had done with me there? Well, then, I would not care!

But if I did not love them, I loved the forest; and it was with slow hands and a numb heart, in spite of myself, that I put back the toys, crept back to bed—and slept. Madame's lozenges had nothing to do with it, for I forgot to take them; but my head had scarcely touched the pillow when I fell asleep, without another thought for anybody or anything.

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#### CHAPTER V.

##### MY HAPPY CONVERSION.

It happened, as has already appeared, that on the day when I was delivered into the hands of Madame Lamont, another young lady was admitted into the school; *she* was not a strong-minded little girl of no affections and a hermit heart, and therefore it was arranged that she should sleep at present with madame's daughter, in a room adjoining mine, for "company;" and I woke in the night to hear her sobbing, and Miss Charlotte imperatively comforting her. "O dear mamma! O my dear, pretty mamma!" wept this little one, "let me come home." Then

I understood Miss Lamont to explain that, with all that noise, the young lady in the next room would certainly wake, and hearing cries and tears for "mamma-a," would give way to affliction at last, and cry too.

—"At last!"

Now I was this young lady, and I was already awake, and heard that breaking of the heart which disturbed Miss Lamont's rest so viciously, and yet no tear came to *my* eyes. No tears when I sat at the window and saw myself abandoned, no tears when I pondered over my toys, no tears now. But listening to the other's grief, it was as if my whole body turned pale as I lay and wondered why I also did not grieve. The very governesses could not believe it of me. Surely my heart was hard! Or was my lot a hard one and not my heart? For if I did not feel my neighbour's sorrow I coveted it. When she sobbed "Mamma," I figured to myself a young, kind-looking, handsome lady seated in a pretty room with a bright fire in it, and by the fire a footstool. But when I considered what I had to grieve for, there came into my mind nothing but a boundless expanse of snow and mist. The difference was very great, and I envied my little neighbour's sufferings with a bitter envy. Long after she had dropt asleep, she and her sufferings and all, I lay debating the matter, but only to leave off as I began—without a tear: only I did not consider that some tears are wept, as some wounds bleed—within. And so when madame herself came to pay me a visit of consolation next morning—never doubting, I daresay, that I had held my heart still till I was alone in the dark—she had her pains for nothing. Madame could find in me no traces of grief at all; but her expectations of pale cheeks and red eyes were so just and so manifestly disappointed that I was almost ashamed to take the tiny cup of coffee which had been brought in aid of her comfortable exhortations.

In the schoolroom my indifference gave positive offence. There were only six young ladies beside myself and the other new pupil, Mary Day; but there was only one opinion—that Mary was a poor little dear, and that I was a heartless thing. Miss Phipps the elder found occasion to observe further that she had heard some people never gave way to grief because they were afraid of spoiling their eyes; upon which I, smiling, showed my school-fellows a set of teeth which no weeping could spoil nor any one of them match.

For the credit of my sex, I must own this was very naughty. But for my own sake I must say that I had a cold heart for my triumph. The time had not yet come when I was conceited of my beauty, but the time had come when I began to pine for a little love. In all my life I had never been blessed with any, and now when I looked round upon the angry faces of my schoolfellows, I longed to explain that I was only perverse because I was forlorn. But pride came in to stay my tongue, and I remembered the injunctions to be silent which I had so often heard. Silent, therefore, I remained; though I felt all the time that if any one of my companions would give me a kind glance, my eyes would stand a risk

of being spoiled forthwith to the utmost satisfaction of Miss Phipps the elder. But my time was coming.

Naturally, I believe, I ought to have cherished a special resentment against Mary Day, who was ostentatiously petted at my expense. But I did not. On the contrary, it was to her I took most kindly, and before the third evening was over we agreed to ask permission to share the same room. For that is how we were lodged at Madame Lamont's—one room for every pair of pupils. This proposition, which madame readily consented to, originated with me; and now mark its selfishness. I wanted to satisfy my imagination with this little one's grief. To be sure, I did not know my own motives then, but now I have no doubt they were founded on some such notion as this: that if she wept in my arms, close to my bosom, I might feel and understand more of that mother's love which made her so wondrous rich, and her grief a thing so enviable.

The experiment succeeded, for we had quite a feast of tears that night. We cried together to begin with; and then I asked Mary what was the matter; and then she told me all about her dear mamma—oh! such a dear mamma!—and papa, whom she did not love quite so well, because he was black and never spoke to anybody, only a little to mamma. We dismissed him, therefore, without much discussion, though we were both breathless when Mary told me how rich he was, and how that, she thought, was because he was always "flooring" somebody. Not that she knew what flooring was, or whether lawyers always did it. I said I did not remember, and then we went back to mamma again.

First I had a minute description of her, which I pieced together into a lovely figure like those in the fashions' plates of milliner's magazines. Mamma was taller than Elizabeth (that was her housemaid), but not so stout as Jane, the cook, you know. She had seven silk dresses, and no one could tell which was prettiest. Her hair was black as ravens' wings, and she wore it in Adelaide curls. Her eyes were black, too, not a shiny black, like Miss Phipps', but soft black, like lead pencil; her lips were, oh, so beautiful to kiss—just like baby's, only nicer.

Now a baby was a thing of which I had scarcely a conception; but Mary's fervent "oh, so beautiful to kiss," was what struck me most.

"Then your mamma often kisses you?" I said in a tremor.

"Oh, yes, when I am at home. Every morning when nurse brings me down, there is mother with a kiss. And every night, when I am tucked in, up comes mamma, and says, "You have said your prayers, my dear?" and I say, "Yes, mamma;" and then she kneels down and says a little prayer all about me, with a bit at the end for baby. And then I have another kiss for Good-night. Always those two, Margaret; but oh, dear! oh, dear! I know she loves me all day long!"

This was hard for me to hear—instructive, but very hard. It was like reading with my fingers in a book how fair the fields are and how beautiful the skies. No mother had ever kissed my mouth; and all I

knew about prayers was, that they were a sort of moral disciplinary thing, customarily used in schools. That "little prayer all about me, with a bit at the end for baby," gave me ideas new as revelation: it opened the boundaries of human love beyond anything I had yet dreamed; and I had dreamed of it and yearned for it more than tongue can tell. Already my mind had associated it, indistinctly, with every sweet and beautiful thing in the forest; but now I saw that it widened up to heaven and ended at the judgment day. I say I *saw*; and so I did. All the thoughts of imaginative children are pictures; and while my little bedfellow greeted anew at her home recollections, I saw mamma kneeling, and Mary with her face turned towards her, and a vast ocean of luminous mist that flowed upwards from the bedside to a great white throne on the far horizon. Believe what you please, but I saw the "little prayer" too; that is to say, I beheld a trembling of the air about the bedside—trembling and flowing away toward the far horizon.

Ah me! how good Mary Day must be, I thought; and so I told her. And how natural it was that I should be naughtier than other girls, which I did not tell; though at last I had no doubt I was. The fact had been represented to me often enough; but I never quite believed in it till now, when there appeared so good a reason for it. Only why I *deserved* to be naughtier than other girls, that puzzled me. And it was so melancholy to find myself dwindling into something utterly insignificant and unknown upon the shores of this boundless Love which reached to heaven, that I began to wish I had never heard about Mary Day's mamma at all: but that I had been left to such homely views of affection as a lost little kitten may have.

So I pretended to fall asleep that I might hear no more, and also that I might contemplate undisturbed another picture which came into my mind—a picture of myself, wandering about in the emerald and jasper heaven of the Revelation, like a child lost in the streets of a strange city—none knowing me, or taking me by the hand. But neither did this satisfy me long. Again I wanted to get back into Mary Day's home, and see its light, and feel its warmth; and just at the right moment she broke into a sudden ecstasy about her baby-brother. The consequence was, that the half-rebellious, all forlorn little dreamer of dreams and seer of visions became at once a mere woman-child again, and presently dropt to sleep in a perfect glow of sympathy with Mary Day's fond home, and the kickings and crowings of its wonderful infant. One thing, however, confused my ideas in a troublesome way. Mary assured me that baby's head was quite bald; and from that moment my conceptions of him were inextricably confounded with John Gilpin, as he appeared in a series of prints upon our walls at home.

All this is worth recording, because the evening, without being eventful, was really an important one in my history. Only I fail to record it with anything but a painful feebleness. I feel, when I try to set down the thoughts, and troubles, and speculations of that night, like one whose

mind is gone—his eyes eagerly, vainly wandering along the lines of a book which give up its meanings no more. But it is well, perhaps, that we forget our dead—even our dead selves—and that our memories of them become ineffectual shadows as they are. Still I cannot *believe* that it is well, and much I wish I could recall better how it was that on that night I did get nearer to the love I longed for, notwithstanding that at first it only seemed farther off, more hopeless, more strange to me than ever. But, somehow, the experiment of poaching on little Miss Day's sorrows, and sharing them, did succeed—to a miracle I might say, because it seemed to be worked while I slept, by agencies apart. For my sleep that night was sweet as music; and when in the morning I woke, and my schoolfellow said, "Now I'll be your mamma—Good morning, Margaret," and kissed me, I felt at last that I really belonged to my kind.

Thenceforward I grew content. Every day found me happier—more like a Christian child and less like a forest-born pagan waif, with nothing for my portion but a burning sense of the beauty and joy of life, in me and in all natural things. Without that most rich gift I don't know what I might have been; but it was good too, I found, to feel like a human creature amongst human creatures. A little while, and I even learned to like Miss Phipps; while as for Mary Day, she and I became the fondest friends ever known in a boarding-school for young ladies. We formally adopted each other as sisters. We plotted to dress as much alike as the arrangements of superior powers permitted, and, so far from having secrets apart, we used to make secrets, I verily believe, for the pleasure of sharing them.

But, warned by my unhappy life in Paris (though I am conscious one half the unhappiness was bred of my own rebellious mind), one thing I never betrayed—my parentage. Of course, concealment could not have been long maintained without Madame Lamont's silence. She knew, however, that amongst my schoolfellows I called myself an orphan, yet never did she contradict me, even by those gentle arts of implication which every woman is proficient in. This was only the tact of one experienced in the world, no doubt; but sometimes I wondered whether madame had not better grounds for her silence than I for my assertion. But however that might be, I was grateful that she said nothing, and this again helped to make me a more docile Miss Forster than had hitherto been known to governesses.

[It is never too soon to clear up misapprehensions, as I have found to my cost; therefore let me set down at once that Madame Lamont was a good enough kind of woman, ignorant of my dear Margaret's history, and caring nothing about it. It was all fair sailing between us, or very nearly. Of course I did not tell Madame Lamont *everything*, and she was a needy woman (as I believe most schoolmistresses are), who did not seek to know everything. The bargain stood simply thus :—"Here" said I (in effect),



"is a young girl I am interested in, having neither kith nor kin of my own. She is being brought up in a dangerous way at present, I fear, and has some peculiarities of temper. It is said she is fanciful, and not always to be relied on for telling the truth; though, as for the latter accusation, I doubt it. However, I shall be glad if you will take her and educate her carefully at my charge." And this, with the customary exchange of references, was all, except that Madame Lamont clapt ten guineas a year upon her usual terms; though I thought little of that under the circumstances. As for Miss Lamont ("Lamont," when they were as English as they could possibly be!), I need not say I knew nothing of her story. It was very curious, but then I never liked the young woman.—J.D.]

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## CHAPTER VI.

### CONFIDENCES UNDESERVED.

AND now that I have described by what accident I began a new and happier life, I do not propose to describe its details in the next two or three years.

What can be said? There we were, eight young ladies in a scholastic dovecot, living strictly in family: eight young ladies so different in appearance, that we might have been supposed to represent half-a-dozen counties at least, but with not more than three varieties of character among us; and of these I had one to myself. Then there was Miss Charlotte, who possessed a certain kind of individuality, to be sure, such as I have described it. She was much talked of amongst us girls, for there was a romantic story to account for her, though when and how it was first told, none of us knew. It was said that at seventeen she had fallen in love with a Catholic magnate in a procession. She had wept over her hopeless passion, Miss Phipps assured me (Miss P. was the senior pupil, and herself much addicted to love), nine days and nights continually; for six months she could not be dissuaded from a religious life, and then only yielded to become permanently callous. This was the story: the lustreless eyes of Miss Lamont being generally accepted as proof of its authenticity. "Cried for nine days and nights! Look at her eyes now!" And certainly her distraught manner on the evening of my introduction to her, favoured the romance too (though I never discussed it amongst my schoolfellows); and, moreover, the story had all the authority of tradition. It had been handed down to Miss Phipps from a previous generation of boarders.

Finally, there was Madame Lamont, a woman who must have been supremely beautiful in her youth, for she was still handsome and vigorous at fifty-four; and a strange sight it was to me to see her (as I once did) eagerly counting turnips, or concentrating the scarcely faded splendours



of a face like Josephine's on the cutting up of beef for to-day's dinner and to-morrow's. Beauty, then, was not inappropriate to that at last, even in well-regulated households! It was very puzzling. Madame was always in debt too, I fear, and accustomed to sordid thoughts and painful shifts. Not but that we were well cared for, and well taught. Miss Charlotte had most of the knowledge and most of the drudgery of teaching, while as for madame, her chief business was to pervade the school with morality and manners. She was really a woman of great dignity and elegance, in spite of her bread-and-butter troubles, and nobody guessed at them. They were so well concealed that they were known to only one unimportant little person in the establishment, and she—that is I—discovered them out of school.

For you should know that when it appeared that I must spend the vacations lonely at Valley House or doubtfully in the forest, my kind guardian arranged with Madame Lamont that she should transport me and her daughter to some lively watering-place, or, in winter, to town. What my guardian's share of the expense was on these occasions, of course, I do not know; \* but I am sure madame did not always think the holiday an unmixed benefit for herself. And surely a sea-side lodging-house is, of all places, the most dreadful for the contemplation of one's own poverty.

It was in a house at Brighton—a house of gentility without and of rapacious misery within—that the wolf that walked at madame's side came into the light. For three days it had rained without ceasing. I had sickened of drawing exercises, we all had sickened of the library (mine were "goody" books every one), and of looking out of window. I say we all, but it is doubtful whether Miss Lamont should be included. She was always the same, though she gained in grace by whatever seemed to give a reason for her clay-cold lethargy. The lamp was lit. There was nothing to do but to net purses; and seeing us engaged in that way, madame could no longer resist the impulse to look her wolf in the face, for he was her rainy-day enemy. Then it appeared that she had brought her account-books down in an old leathern writing-case. She spread them before her, and jauntily sat down to them, saying that here she should find some amusement, no doubt.

Now, what amusement there was in book-keeping I had yet to learn: and so it was that I looked up now and then to judge of the entertainment by madame's countenance. At first it seemed an indifferent occupation enough; but soon a sad change became manifest. She was unaware of it, no doubt. She was gradually absorbed and bewildered out of consciousness; and did not know, perhaps did not care at the moment, how pale she was, looking into the jaws of the future. But I saw it, and not quite understanding the reason why, was troubled. Miss Lamont never looked up from her netting, and therefore was perfectly composed. All

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\* A pretty considerable part.—J. D.

this struck me as strange and unnatural; and unable to endure it long without doing something, I invented a little catarrh.

This brought madame back to her company, if it failed to inspirit her daughter. "Ah," said the embarrassed accountant, "you two are very busy making purses; if you were as dexterous in filling them, I would make one as big as my nightcap. And that would not be too big."

"So I suppose," Miss Lamont murmured, still without raising her head.

"You don't know, Charlotte?"

"I confess I am more eager for a nightcap I could always sleep in."

"Which is exactly my desire. A Fortunatus' cap is the only one I am likely to sleep in. That is what comes of being an old woman. Pray for everlasting youth, Margaret, if you would always be indifferent to money," madame added, addressing me with as much gaiety as vexation allowed her to put on, for vexed she was obviously; it was told in the hasty way in which she returned to her cabalistical books, where I have no doubt the genius of debt rose at her from her every page.

And this is why I have no doubt of it. Not only by the manifest concern which again overcame her; but presently shading her face with one hand, she wrote two or three lines upon a scrap of paper, and (her face still hidden) pushed it across the table to me.

"How do you read that?" she asked, as if it were a school question. Besides, how could I know that, in her perturbation, Madame Lamont had mistaken my place at the table for her daughter's?

"Pressing debts," I read aloud, "a hundred and thirteen pounds. Other debts——"

But there I was arrested by madame with a startled gesture, and also by her daughter, who quietly took the paper from my hand, saying—

"It is for me, my dear. Well, mamma, I hope you will soon be paid. It is really a sin that people should owe you so much money."

"Or that I should owe others so much?" said madame, with unexpected bitterness.

"Oh, is it so! I did not understand."

This remark was uttered with the same tranquillity (the tranquillity of acid in a jar) as the other; but Miss Lamont was herself vexed at last, perhaps, for immediately after the rejection of her dutiful white lie she found a pretext for leaving the room.

There was an awkward silence now for a while; one of those silences in which we can almost hear the hustling of rapid thoughts. Madame recovered her composure first, of course, but still there was some trepidation in her voice when she called me, and holding my hand as I stood before her, said—

"How old are you now, my dear?"

"I was fifteen on my last birthday, you know, madame."

"Fifteen, and almost a woman! But I need not have asked you; for

I know you are at any rate wise enough not to notice unkindly whatever unpleasant things you may be forced to see *en famille* by becoming one of us, for so you really are. That is your misfortune. I have never forgotten it is a misfortune for you; and I ask—no, I do not ask you to be kind to mine, for that I see you are, by your looking so ashamed at having discovered my shame."

"Not shame, madame."

"Yes, Margaret, shame. Debt is shameful. You see what it has done for us to-night. It led poor Charlotte into a fib which was amiable, and which she thought necessary; but it is my duty to tell you it could not be innocent, because it was degrading. You see how much I trust to your good sense in using such language."

"Don't, then, dear madame."

"But I ought, and I must, unless I am to give you examples of petty degradation without warning you of the mischief. And what followed upon Charlotte's fib—which was not harmless to herself, even if no one else is injured by it? I lose temper in your presence, and am rude to her: all by the irritation and shame of debt."

"But Miss Lamont was not kind to you!" I exclaimed.

"What do you mean, my dear?" she asked, wistfully.

"She—she did not care!"

"And you do!" said Madame Lamont, at which my heart began to swell out of all proportion. But had I not just been told that I was almost a woman?

Madame Lamont turned her face thoughtfully to the lamp for a moment (which helped me to set up unstable womanhood again), and then continued,—

"You are my daughter too, to-night; and I will not stop short in the lesson now that it has begun, unfortunately. Besides, we must do justice to Charlotte. You think she does not care for anything. Now, suppose I told you that *that* comes originally of debt?"

"I do not understand."

"No, my dear, nor can I explain. But justify my confidence in you by taking what I say not as a matter of curiosity, but like a geographical fact, for instance, which you are not obliged to sift and verify. It is something painfully told for your good, and rather to settle curiosity, in fact. And after what you have seen and said——"

"I have no curiosity at all, madame, and I hope I have said nothing. I am sure I never will!"

"Thank you," she said, looking that pathetic, painful picture—a woman struggling against conscious humiliation. "But as for Miss Lamont, and that she doesn't care. It is not much to tell you now, Margaret, that her fault is her unhappiness; and though I think she may not see the matter fairly, she has reason enough to believe that my debts first occasioned the unhappiness. Well, then, if she does not care for what has made her careless, I ought not to be surprised; you see it is

all according to the fatal logic of debt. And so we must not again be angry with her, though she appear never so heartless—by which I rather mean hopeless, you know; and whenever——”

(“The Catholic gentleman must be at the bottom of it, though,” I thought.)

—“and whenever you see me very unhappy, whisper to yourself ‘debt,’ and resolve to avoid what is always a curse, and to women a fatal curse. But whisper it to no one else. For if you do—if my embarrassments became known to the parents of your school-fellows, what would happen, do you think?”

I shook my head, for I saw that she did not mean that the parents would help her out of the embarrassments.

“There would probably be an end to our daily bread, my dear.”

“Then I’ll be torn to pieces by wild horses first,” I exclaimed, angry and sorry at once.

“Do, Margaret,” said madame, smiling, “for on that condition I know I shall be safe.”

With this grim small joke, she released my hand in token that the conversation was ended, and kissed me to seal what had been said. The hateful “books” were put aside, and so eager was I to see them disposed of in the writing-case again, that I hurried to help madame, and in my haste pushed two of the horrible neat little volumes from the table on to the floor. With equal eagerness I picked them up, spite of madame’s deprecations. One of them had fallen open, and I could not avoid seeing that it had a pictorial frontispiece—a water-colour portrait stuck upon the inside of the cover. However, I was too unfamiliar with account-books to discern anything very remarkable in that.

The books cofined and locked in, Madame Lamont took up Charlotte’s purse; I resumed work upon my own, with leisure to ponder madame’s unwilling confidences, which had this secret satisfaction for me, that they made me still more a “woman.” Apart from the timid flutterings of exultation which even the bare idea occasioned, whenever it came in, the result of my meditations was a revulsion of feeling against Miss Lamont. Madame had apologized for her, not only with generosity, but with decorum. I felt it was in a great measure what I might now call an apology of society; one which she knew would be accepted as beyond her daughter’s deserts, and her own culpability. That Charlotte kept an old, cold, corpse-like grievance between herself and the world, particularly including mamma, was plain; and recalling many little scenes and incidents which ought to have given me the discovery long ago, I saw in the same retrospect that madame had not always shown herself so tolerant of her daughter’s wilful decease, as she had done to-night. And only debt! I failed to see that it was natural Miss Lamont “should not care,” with such provoking consistency; and the notion returned that there must be something sentimental in the case to keep her grievance unburied. If not the Catholic gentleman, then somebody else.—Had

Miss Lamont's sweetheart that she had when she was a young woman (it was inconceivable that she should have one now at *her* age!), had he been sent to prison for madame's debts?—and died there?

Being myself "almost a woman," I began to pity Miss Lamont again, at the mere supposition of such a thing. Between the meshes of my purse appeared pictures of the poor lover seized by brutal minions of the law, and thrust into gaol; pictures of him crouched half naked in the corner of a stone cell, haggard, hungry, dying, indifferent even to Miss Lamont, who, with her bonnet fallen to the back of her head, and her hair all down, stood gazing at him through the bars. Dreadful fate! if true. And every moment the probability seemed to increase, as the pictures grew larger and more distinct. Bits of detail came in with surprising harmony and meaning, the most remarkable being a sword and a pair of epaulettes, suspended from a nail in the prison wall. These I could not fail to connect instantly with the line embossed at the head of that copy of verses which Miss Lamont had given me to read, with so much mystery, on my first evening at school—"—th Hussars!"

Now, it was not that I thought of the paper first, and imagined the sword afterwards; on the contrary, the fancy recalled the fact, and therefore I was all the more impressed by what to my mind, untaught to disentangle the relations between cause and effect, seemed almost like an inspiration. There was probably a lover—a gentleman in the Hussars; there certainly was debt; debt's last terror, as I understood, was a gaol; and people died miserably in gaols; and Charlotte must have lost her lover, and yet the original cause of her disasters was debt—madame's debts: then the lover died in prison for those debts. Such, I suppose, was the artless process of deduction which amused, or rather amazed me.

Yes, but was it possible? Was Madame Lamont capable of allowing her daughter's lover to perish in prison, or was this only another of the romantic follies I had so often been taunted with? Romantic folly, no doubt. For looking into madame's face for the signs of a hard heart or a troubled conscience, I beheld nothing but the lady-like placidity and benevolence always shown there.

But she was little more at her ease than I myself perhaps; and it is probable that during my cogitations I had glanced towards her oftener, and with looks more speculative, than I was conscious of. However that may be, she suddenly threw down her netting, and going wearily to the window, announced with loud satisfaction that the rain had ceased, and the moon had risen very brightly.

"And so," she said, "I'll take a brisk, brief walk along the esplanade. It is too late for you, my dear; Miss Lamont will accompany me, no doubt."

Now I could not think nine o'clock of a moonlit summer evening too late; but then I loved to be alone, and was particularly pleased with the prospect of a "good think" in solitude to-night. Indeed it was rather

as if the ladies had taken solitude away with them when the door closed, and I found myself quite alone.

More light, more warmth, more cosiness was shut in with the shutting of the door. No more purse-netting for me either; work dropped from my hands, and dream-making began. I went to the window, folded the curtains about me, and looked out upon the moonshiny street.

Now the moon always seemed mine, since that night of beauty and terror by the brook—at the pool. Its face was motherly; and though, whenever I looked on it and thought of that other face that was neither of heaven nor earth, the vision came back, it came back softened, more pensive, no longer terrible at all. In these chapters about my school-days at Madame Lamont's I have said nothing of the miraculous phantom, but it is not therefore to be supposed that I had quite forgotten it, or that it had forsaken me. No. But in the first place I do not like to write about it more than I must; and again, it is true that after my "conversion" opened a new and happier existence for me, I tried, if not to forget the old days, at any rate to put off my old self; and though it may presently appear that I did not succeed so well as I imagined, it did come to pass that by the time I am now writing about, I had ceased to brood over my visions and suspicions, and was content to think of them as soberer people might have done: as the children of a brain hive-full of wonders, alive with earnest fantasies. Still, I say, I had not quite forgotten that face, nor had it forsaken me. To-night I saw it almost as plainly as at first—only it seemed very, very far off, though it floated in the light that flowed over the flagstones of the street. It was more beautiful and tender now, but less significant; and I could think of other things in the same moment as I thought of it. Many scenes came back out of my past life; that life which was done and ended (apparently) when I came to Madame Lamont's; and though they were vividly interesting to me who had *lived* them, I could only be grateful to my kind guardian who had ended them all.

Have I said anything of him? Nothing of him, yet he was much to me at this time too, and had a large share of my thoughts. He came down to see me at distant intervals; passed an afternoon with us in a blunt, speechless, watchful manner, ascertained my wants, and went away to supply them. Sometimes he sent me a letter, which madame always read—by his desire, she said: there was nothing in them but "How do you do?" and "Hope you are still a good girl," and "Yours affectionately." Nothing, I say; but, besides their kindness, these letters made me feel that I belonged to the world out of doors, though what part I should probably play in it was a question I had never debated yet, and happily could not foresee. Still, kind as my guardian was, I do not suppose I should have thought of him much if he had not got gloomier as time went on, or if he had not told me lately (à propos of a little headache of mine) of some disease which was consuming his life away. But while he spoke he looked so strong, with all the handsomeness



which health bestows on the ugliest man, that I laughed: and then, for a moment, he *did* seem ill.\*

Meanwhile here am I, a wise little woman in the window-seat, pondering the things which bright moonlight never failed to bring back to my memory. It was not in them, however, that I was most interested at present, but rather in what had happened that evening, and my romantic theory about Miss Lamont. On reflection I was not so satisfied with it; but still there was the hussar, and I could not help connecting him in a hazy, maundering way with the congelation of Charlotte's feelings. At length, when I had almost wandered away from the subject, the question started up in my mind—Whose portrait was that in the account-book? A portrait in an account-book? Not without special reasons, surely: reasons connected with the debts—and with Miss Lamont's unhappiness.

When this thought struck me, I pushed the curtain aside, that, not being able to see the portrait itself, I might at any rate look on what concealed it. There was the desk, sure enough; more, there was the key in the lock!

I confess. The next moment I stood before the worn leather box, with my fingers on the key; trembling with curiosity, burning with shame. The baser instinct carried me to the desk instantly; the better made me pause, breathless, on the threshold of my first dishonour. My heart, how it beat! my cheeks, how they burned! and yet I kept my hand upon the key. I listened—there was not a sound; but oh, if any one could see! But then it was not madame's accounts I wished to peep at, nor to pry into any of her secrets. What was there in a picture, a portrait, that should be of any moment, hidden? Besides, I had already seen it: there could be no harm, then, in looking again. No, I would not look, it was a guilty thing to do.—And at the same instant the desk was opened. The desk was opened, the book came into my hands, and there was the portrait under my eager shameful gaze. It was a picture of a young man—handsome, unknown to me, and not in military dress, even.

That was my grand discovery!

Looking at it—what had I learned, after all? That for some grave reason, or from some odd whim, Madame Lamont had affixed a man's portrait to the record of her debts, I had already seen, innocently; and now what more had I discovered to compensate for the sense of littleness, of unalterable dishonour, under which I shrank when those eyes of insensible paint met mine? Nothing. Stare as I would, they knew not me, and had nothing to reveal. In my heart I felt the emptiness of all ill-doing, as I snapped the lock to again—snapped it with a noise so sharp and

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\* I do not remember having said this, or Margaret laughing. But if so, I hit upon the very best word in the dictionary for my then condition, that's all. Only I wish to my heart I had borne with that Disease, instead of taking the mad means that I did to cure it.—J. D.



dreadful that I started at the sound. In my face, when I stole like a slippered thief to the glass to see what I was now, I beheld all that I felt in my heart: it was a pale, empty face, with only the self-searching eyes alive. Well, I was punished. The world had come to an end now for me, it seemed, and every day would only be one nearer to the day of judgment.

See how we change. When I look back upon that little girl, shivering back to her window-seat, I love and pity and respect her as if she had never been me. Knowing full well how naughty she had been, Margaret's fault appears to me of no moment, and her shame as beautiful as it was great. Certainly it is touching. For I know I have no shame like that now for anything.

What could I do? Again, nothing. That which was done could not be undone: the face in the book came out upon the air wherever I turned my eyes, and seemed to say so. I began to wish—not that I had never done the wrong, that appeared so hopeless. I wished madame would leave me no longer alone—for how could I be trusted, or trust myself? I wished she would come and find me out. Or I might confess? No; for how could I begin, after the confidence she had shown me to-night? how, when I knew she had so much need to trust me? But I might lead to my own discovery by throwing the desk open, and then madame would herself begin.

Thus I stood debating miserably when a loud knock was made at the hall door—too loud to be Madame Lamont's, so loud that my heart beat even quicker yet. Had I been detected then? The windows opposite were dark, and I might have been watched by some one standing there, whom I could not see. But our curtains were drawn; and if I had disarranged them so that anybody could look in when I started from the window, I must have noticed it afterwards—yes, for my guilty eyes had searched everywhere, for fear I had been spied. As for the man whom I had seen standing in the street a little while since——

Some one entered below. A word or two passed hurriedly, and a man's feet came bounding up the stairs. Then there was a rapping at the door of the drawing-room; but how could I answer? Not that he waited more than a moment for permission, but walked gaily in. He was the man whose portrait I had been so wickedly looking at.

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## Impulsive Criticism.

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### A LETTER

FROM "J. O." TO THE EDITOR OF THE "CORNHILL MAGAZINE."

SIR,—Mr. Thomas Hughes, a most accomplished and honest gentleman, and a very good friend of mine, has published, in the *Spectator* of the 31st of October, a criticism of my paper on the Mhow Court-martial. Mr. Hughes in exposing what I am sure he sincerely believes to be the unpardonable unfairness with which my paper is written, speaks so handsomely of me, its writer, and pays so many compliments to my pen at the expense of my conscience, that it is with great reluctance I dissect his article at all. But I feel that I owe a duty to those whose cause I have undertaken to advocate; and that were I to kiss in silence the rod with which Mr. Hughes has so rashly smitten me, it might be supposed that I admitted the accuracy and justice of his criticism, in which case others would suffer as well as myself.

I think, therefore, that I had better proceed to show, as I can very easily do, that Mr. Hughes does not understand the subject on which he attempts to confute me; that he has not taken reasonable pains to acquaint himself with its details, and that the arguments which he has used tend rather to establish than to subvert the case as stated by me.

Mr. Hughes opens his attack thus:—

"The first grave assertion of 'J. O.'s' 'story' is that the *morale* and discipline of the regiment were good when Colonel Crawley joined, and that he himself admitted this with respect to the non-commissioned officers and men."

This assertion Mr. Hughes ridicules as false and unfair.

Now, if my critic will turn to H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge's memorandum of the 18th December, 1862, he will see that the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army has therein stated that he possesses official proofs that at the time Colonel Shute handed over the 6th Dragoons to Colonel Crawley, the discipline and efficiency of that regiment were in a satisfactory state. And, in taking leave of his officers, in March, 1861, but one month before Colonel Crawley joined, Colonel Shute said to them in his valedictory address, "It has been with the greatest gratitude to my comrades, as well as with the greatest pride, that at every inspection and

review of the Inniskillings, I have heard the regiment spoken of with admiration"—(p. 144).

With respect to the non-commissioned officers and men, I conceive that my "story" is sufficiently corroborated by the following extract from Colonel Crawley's own admissions on that point, which Mr. Hughes, strangely enough, represents himself as having read with attention:—"The state in which I found the regiment, the setting up of the men, their steadiness on foot-parade, their orderly and respectful conduct to their officers, the small amount of crime, and the general good feeling existing between the non-commissioned officers and the soldiers, showed me how good and beneficent had been Colonel Shute's command of the regiment, as far as the soldiery were concerned"—(p. 170).

Mr. Hughes next plunges rather wildly and unintelligibly into the evidence bearing on Colonel Crawley's alleged presence at the muster-parades of May, 1861, and January, 1862. He finally arrives at the same conclusion as myself—viz., "that Colonel Crawley was not on the ground during either of these parades;" but he pleads, on the colonel's behalf, that he was in the neighbourhood, and that he came on to the ground soon after the parades were over. This leaves the seven witnesses, who swore positively that they saw Colonel Crawley on the ground during these parades, in a very unpleasant position, from which I invite Mr. Hughes to extricate them.

My critic seems to forget that no charge was ever brought by Captain Smales against his colonel for culpably neglecting his regimental duties. The paymaster's insubordinate remarks were to the following effect:—

"You persecute me, and bring formal charges against me whenever I deviate in the most unimportant degree from my official duties. Do you never deviate from yours? Have you not been often absent from muster-parades at which you nevertheless have returned yourself present? Was not such the case on the 1st of May, 1861, and the 1st of January, 1862?"

Colonel Crawley replied to these queries by bringing charges of "falsehood and malice" against Captain Smales for having made them. Now, Mr. Hughes declares that he has carefully studied the whole of the evidence, and that Captain Smales' assertions were strictly true, for that Colonel Crawley had not been actually present at either of the parades in question. If so, where was "the falsehood and the malice?"

I have only one more observation to make. Mr. Hughes accuses me of having improperly and unfairly prejudged the case about to be tried at Aldershot; the subject of which is to be, according to Mr. Hughes, "the arrests of the sergeants, and the conduct of the court-martial at Mhow." Now there can be no denial that both these points have been effectually prejudged by far higher authorities than myself—viz., H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief and the Judge Advocate-General. But it will

scarcely be believed that Mr. Hughes has ventured upon his public criticism of my paper, and his public condemnation of myself, without taking the trouble to inform himself as to what the charges really are upon which Colonel Crawley is about to be tried. If he will inquire, he will find that they have nothing whatever to do either with the arrest of the sergeant-majors, or the conduct of the late trial.

The approaching inquiry is limited, first, as to whether Colonel Crawley carried out the orders of his superior officers in the arrest of Sergeant-major Lilley with unnecessary cruelty; and, secondly, as to whether he falsely stated that the alleged cruelty with which Lilley and his wife were treated, was to be attributed to the misconduct of his Adjutant, not to any orders given by himself.

I invite Mr. Hughes to cite a single sentence in my paper in the *Cornhill*, which prejudices either of these two points.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. O.

*Naples, November 15.*

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JOHN H. S. QUICK.

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